THE

HISTORY

OF

OPHELIA.

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OPHELIA.

CHAP. XXXI.

MRS. Herner and I ſet out at the very moment ſhe had appointed; for I ſoon found, that ſhe was as regular as a pendulum. I could have wiſhed ſhe had borne a more extenſive reſemblance to a clock; conſtant ticking, indeed, might have been too much; but had ſhe ſtruck, though it had been only once an hour, it would have been a great relief to me; for I felt an ardent longing to talk; convinced by her ſex and age, that ſhe

was, by inclination, loquacious, I hoped to vanquiſh her obſtinate ſilence by the force of temptation; and accordingly aſked her various queſtions, and ſuch as I thought might be moſt intereſting, but without the leaſt effect; not a ſingle word in anſwer could I obtain; and at laſt deſiſted in deſpair; keeping the reſt of the day an inviolable ſilence.

As I had, for a conſiderable time, no employ but gazing at my fellow traveller's outward form, I will make your ladyſhip my companion in it, by deſcribing her to you. Mrs. Herner was a little woman, near fifty years of age very thin and brown, with a very long noſe and chin, hollow cheeks, wide mouth, ſcarcely any eyebrows, and light grey eyes, which, however, were not void of a ſweetneſs, denoting ſome portion of good humour in the mind that animated them. Dejection and humiliation appeared in her whole aſpect; her air, and every look, were prim and demure.

once

I once ſaw Mrs. Herner before I was taken priſoner by her couſin, and then learnt a little of her hiſtory, which I ſhall impart.

Mrs. Herner had originally a moderate fortune, and, on the death of the Marchioneſs's mother, who was her couſin-german, and intimate friend, ſhe took the Marchioneſs to live with her, being moved to compaſſion by her being left intirely deſtitute of a proviſion. Mrs Herner, from the time ſhe firſt became poſſeſſed of her fortune, lived above her income; and though ſhe perceived the principal was every year decreaſing, ſhe had not prudence to retrench. The rank in which ſhe lived, gave fair opportunity to the Marchioneſs's charms to win her a more laſting proviſion than ſhe could have received from Mrs. Herner; accordingly, before ſhe was eighteen, the Marquis of Trente ſaw her, and becoming truly enamoured, married her: but lived a very ſhort time after raiſing her to the rank and fortune which gave birth to her uncontrouled inſolence.

Mrs. Herner's fortune laſted a very few years beyond this marriage; and, by a ſtrange fatality, ſhe ſpent to the laſt ſhilling before ſhe attempted to leſſen her expences. When ſhe had no longer means to ſupport them, the Marchioneſs ſeemed to hold out the hand of conſolation to her, inviting her home; but the poor woman ſoon found that pride, not generoſity, offered her this neceſſary relief; for the Marchioneſs made her exchange poverty for wretchedneſs. She eſteemed ſo highly an act ſhe was bound in duty to perform, that leſt Mrs. Herner ſhould be leſs ſenſible of the weight of the obligation, ſhe refreſhed her remembrance continually, and expected, in return for her charity, that ſhe ſhould undertake the care of her family, and comply with every inclination her ladyſhip ſhould condeſcend to ſignify. Her paſſions were extremely violent, and never appeared in ſuch full luſtre as when her unhappy couſin was the object; for as ſhe had no other dependance, ſhe knew ſhe muſt endure all.

Thus

Thus the poor woman, for a ſubſiſtence, ſold herſelf to the moſt abject ſlavery: but ſhe was too proud to take any other means of gaining a ſupport. "Pride that licks the duſt," ſhe had, but no true ſpirit; for to pacify the Marchioneſs in her furies, ſhe would deſcend to the meaneſt flattery, and was ruled by a frown or a nod. From a continual ſervile compliance with the will of another, ſhe loſt all liberty of thought, of which only one's own meanneſs can deprive one. She entirely forgot the method of pronouncing the word no; her language was compoſed of nothing but expreſſions of aſſent and affirmatives; and ſhe would contradict her own ſenſes as often as her violent and capricious couſin happened to err. So accuſtomed to obey, ſhe ſcarcely could find out terms that would expreſs her refuſal of the liberty ſhe dared not grant me. I ſometimes miſtook her negatives for conſent, and ſhould not have diſcovered my error, had ſhe not checked

me when I was going to act in conſequence of it.

In this *lively* manner did we travel for three days, without accident or interruption. But, the night of the third, as I was beginning to undreſs myſelf, after having ſat a little time meditating on my deplorable ſituation, I was alarmed with the cry of "fire, murder, rape, beaſt, brute, "ſavage!" The clamour I could diſtinguiſh to come from Mrs. Herner's room, and thinking myſelf bound in duty to aſſiſt even my enemy, I ran to try what I could do towards her relief. When I entered, I perceived her with a double towel round her head, by way of night-cap, in a ſhort ragged bed-gown, ſtanding by a bed, in which was a man who held faſt by one corner of her little jerkin. I did not comprehend the motive for this detention, conſequently knew not the cauſe of her fear; but ſenſible that I alone was not ſufficient to reſcue her from the arms of this giant, I attempted to open a door in the paſſage, in order to call in more uſeful.

ful people, but found it locked, the conſequence of my goaler's care of me. Had I not been of a moſt charitable diſpoſition, reſentment might have prompted me to let her ſuffer by the means ſhe had taken to prolong my captivity; but I conquered the impulſe, and taking the key out of her pocket, let in our hoſteſs, and ſome of her ſervants, who, like myſelf, had been attracted by the noiſe.

Our landlady I found more equal to the taſk than I was; ſhe ſoon reſcued the timorous virgin, telling the gentleman, with a very ſonorous voice, that "ſhe wondered he, who was a "Juſtice of the Peace and Quorum "ſhould ſo diſturb a quiet family; for "her part, ſhe would not ſuffer ſuch "*normous* behaviour in her houſe, not "even by his honour's worſhip."

He, with a voice that denoted much ſleepineſs, replied, "woman hold thy "brawling; I have not diſturbed thy "curſed houſe; I was ſleeping qui-"etly when that wench waked me. "She has a mind to coy it a little "now, but the jade was willing enough

" to come to bed to me before I aſked " her. I did not want company; " but I ſcorn to diſappoint a woman; " and I ſhall have her ſtill for all " thy clamour; for I know ſhe is " kind at bottom."

At this declaration, Mrs. Herner ſcreamed out, " O ſave me! preſerve " my honour! do not let the wicked " wretch come near me;" and caught up a candle to light her in her flight. Being obliged to paſs by the ſide of the bed, in order to get to the door, the man had a much more perfect view of the affrighted fair than he had before, whoſe appearance, I muſt confeſs, was not very alluring; for her lips were greaſed with tallow, her eyes done thinly over with a dark coloured ointment, and the reſt of her face covered with thick cream not quite dry; and through ſome " chinks which " time had made" in her bed gown, her yellow ſkin ſhone reſplendent; ſo like gold through a netted purſe, that it could charm nothing but a miſer. He beheld her with aſtoniſhment for near a minute, and then, with all the

appearance

appearance of ſcorn and diſtaſte that his countenance could wear, which was better ſuited to ſuch expreſſions than to any of a gentler kind, he cried out, "wicked wretch! not ſo wicked "as to want thy company, thou "witch, thou monſter! full light would "better have obtained thy releaſe than "all thy ſtruggling. Have ſuch a "hag as thee by my ſide! I had "rather have fowler or my crop horſe "for my bedfellow." This adventure ſhocked me ſtrangely; there ſeemed an enormity of wickedneſs in this man that amazed me; but yet, when he had thus addreſſed a figure which had ſurprized me almoſt as much as it had done him, I could not reſtrain a ſmile. As I was near the candles, he perceived it, and looking at me (after the ſhort preface of an oath) "that's a pretty laſs, faith," ſaid he, "and looks good-natured and mer-"ry. I love a hoddy girl hugely, "that will make one laugh, and laugh "with one, and ſhare a pot of good "October, when a man has no better

" company; ſuch a wench is worth " fighting for; and I will have her in- " ſtead of thee, thou Succubus, who art " nothing like a woman but in thy " brawling." I was not more valiant than Mrs. Herner, but being much more nimble, I ran out of the room with the utmoſt ſpeed. Not unmindful of the opportunity of the double eſcape I had to effect; and as deſirous of getting free from woman as from man, and I ran through the door I had opened, and got into the yard; but was there overtaken by Mrs. Herner, in freſco as before, with the reſt of the family at her heels.

As ſoon as I diſappeared, ſhe recollected the deſire I might have, and not finding me in my room, was as clamorous at my eſcape as ſhe had been about her own detention. Without ſtaying for an increaſe of cloathing, ſhe ran after me; and it is no wonder that, unincumbered by the weight of dreſs, ſhe overtook me, whoſe flight had been retarded by not knowing where to go. I cannot pretend to ſay what vengeance I might have

have taken at being thus diſappointed of my purpoſe, had not the ſervants of the inn revenged my cauſe with ſome ſucceſs, by hooting at her figure, and burſting into ſuch immoderate peals of laughter, that our hoſteſs, at laſt, thought it incumbent on her to reſent it; and with a ſhrill pipe, cried out, "what do the villains mean? Muſt "you affront a gentlewoman truly? "Did you never ſee a woman in her "ſmock before? If madam's lips are "chapped and her eyes ſore, what's "the matter of that, it is no body's "buſineſs but her own, ſure! ſuch "fine tallow as we burn would not "diſgrace the mouth of the firſt "Dutcheſs in the land; it is as ſweet "as a nut, and much more *healinger* "than all their *curous* ſalves. As for "her eyes, why eyes ſhould be black, "ſhould not they? and what ſignifies "whether outſide or in, or inſide or "out, its much the ſame thing."

This eloquent oration a little ſuſpended the laugh; but they took in no more matter for mirth, that the time

time might not be loſt, ſtaring without interruption at the object of it; for the good landlady, determined Mrs. Herner ſhould hear how well ſhe defended her cauſe, kept faſt hold of her, till her flow of oratory ceaſed. When we were conducted up ſtairs, I was again locked up till morning, and then I attended Mrs. Herner, to whom another room had been given. At breakfaſt, our landlady came to pay her compliments of enquiry after the health of the poor affrighted lady, which was not a little impaired by the night's adventure, her fears laſting longer than her danger; for ſhe told us it communicated itſelf even to her dreams.

As ſhe condeſcended to talk with our hoſteſs, though not to converſe with me, I learnt the occaſion of the diſturbance, which was no other than a ſmall error in the gentleman, whoſe intellects were a little troubled by too hard drinking in celebration of a fox chaſe, in which he had been engaged that day; for in going up ſtairs to bed, he had miſtaken Mrs. Herner's

Herner's room for his own, and taken poſſeſſion of it.

In the courſe of this converſation, I found nothing had ſo ſenſibly hurt Mrs. Herner, as the Squire's affronting her charms. When ſhe had heard our hoſteſs's account, ſhe ſaid, that, "indeed, by his ſtrange boiſterouſneſs, ſhe at firſt ſuſpected he had "drank a little too much, but did "not find out till afterwards how to"tally he was deprived of his ſenſes; "of one ſenſe, at leaſt, for the man "was certainly blind. The hurry and "buſtle that enſued, ſhe ſuppoſed, had "increaſed the effects of the liquor; "for he ſeemed in full poſſeſſion of "his judgment, at firſt, only his paſſions were a little too much elevated "to bear with proper compoſure the "view of temptation." Thus attributing to the fumes of intoxication the honeſt impulſe of nature, which made diſguſt the conſequence of a full view of her perſon.

Mrs. Herner hinted, that it was incumbent on him as a gentleman to aſk

aſk pardon for the outrage he had committed. "So I told him, madam," replied the landlady, "and what think "you he anſwered to this? Why, tru-"ly, taking me very ſhort, and ſwear-"ing like a trooper, he ſaid, "not he, "he ſhould aſk no pardon, nor make "no defences; he had made the gen-"tlewoman a very civil proffer, ſhe "might not receive the like of many "a day; and, he thought, if ſhe be-"lieved him in earneſt, ſhe had more "reaſon to come and thank him than "he to aſk her any pardons." Oh! madam, he is a ſad ribaldry gentleman, added the landlady.

I ſaw Mrs. Herner could have excuſed the warmth of the good woman's reſentment, which led her to ſo faithful a repetition of the Squire's words, but, with ſome change of colour, ſhe, at laſt, ſagaciouſly obſerved, "that "every one had a ſenſe only of the "charms of their own ſpecies. She "never heard of a bat that preferred "the elegant pheaſant to its own lea-"ther-winged race, nor of a hedge

"hog

" hog that was not fonder of its own " ſhapeleſs kind than of the beautiful " peacock."

Our converſation ended with breakfaſt, and we left the inn to proceed on our journey, that now drew to a concluſion; which, as I had received a ſtrange notion of the confuſion in inns, from what I had experienced, would not have been a diſagreeable circumſtance to me, had I not flattered myſelf that from it ſome opportunity of an eſcape might ariſe.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXII.

OUR Landlady had entertained us with an invective againſt drunkenneſs, (though her complexion bore ſome tokens of leſs inveteracy againſt that vice) which employed my thoughts for part of the day. Nothing I had ſeen in this country more aſtoniſhed me, than that, for ſo trifling a pleaſure as liquor could afford, any one ſhould relinquiſh reaſon, that beſt gift of the Great Creator. It is inconſiſtent with the pride of man, thus to deſtroy the ſource of all his inſolence and preſumption. But the terms in which this vice was reproached offended me. "The "debaſing themſelves to the condition "of brutes," was an expreſſion I thought very unjuſt. Perhaps many, even when not intoxicated, have no right to be enrolled in ſo honourable a claſs; but when deprived of all ſenſe and reaſon, ſurely they ought not to be compared to that generation, who act conformably to the will of their Creator, and to their rank amongſt the animal tribes. Some, indeed,

deed, by living amongſt mankind, loſe a little of their native temperance, and acquire bad qualities; ſuch is the force of example! void of knowledge of good and evil, they are qualified to walk in the way ordained for them, but not to reſiſt the infection of the grand corrupter, man.

There is nothing ſo mean, as people who are artificially inſenſible; vegetation produces more uſeful materials; a tree, for inſtance, properly manufactured, ſupports a paſſenger, fills up a gap, or if worn out by long ſervice it ſhould be condemned, it blazes to warm us, fulfills its part, and is a uſeful member among created beings, in compariſon of a man addicted to drunkenneſs. But, perhaps, your Ladyſhip will think I put an affront both on you and myſelf, by exclaiming at ſo undeſerving a ſubject, unworthy of employing your thoughts, and my pen; therefore I will leave it for my journey, which ended the evening we left our turbulent inn.

We arrived at the Marchioneſs's caſtle a little before it was dark, which afforded me an opportunity of ſeeing

ſeeing it, though the view did not greatly conduce to my ſatisfaction.

We firſt paſſed a moat, over which was a bridge, ſo impaired by time and damp, that it threatened us with no ſmall chance of viſiting the frogs, who inhabited underneath. I could not help thinking that they ſaw us approach, and taking us for the ſucceſſor of their former king, the hoarſe nation was once more ready to croak, "God "ſave King Log;" but I afterwards found the noiſe was uſual, and only the reſult of numbers, from which, among frogs as well as men, a general hum ariſes.

The caſtle was then tottering with age, and may now, perhaps, by the irreſiſtible arm of old Time, be levelled to the ground; therefore I ſhall ſpeak of the fabrick only in the paſt tenſe. The rooms were extremely large, wainſcotted with oak, which was turned almoſt as black as ebony; and all the light that entered was from ſmall caſements, with a larger proportion of lead and iron than glaſs. The chimneys were as big as the

the arch of a large bridge. The beds were higher than ſome rooms, and all the furniture large and clumſy, except the chairs, whoſe ſeats were ſtuffed with admirable art, being harder than a tennis ball, and riſing in the middle in imitation of a pyramid.

The hall was hung round with a moſt uncomely repreſentation of the Marquis of Trente's anceſtors, except in two ſlips, which were filled with rolls of parchment of a prodigious length, bearing, in the figure of a tree, the genealogy of the whole race. If a poor babe died in its birth, its memory was ſtill preſerved, under the dignifying repreſentation of a little twig; but a miſcarriage was honoured no farther than in being marked as a knot in the trunk. I could not but admire this care leſt vanity ſhould die for want of food, where few flatterers could come without feeling their conſciences ſo affected by the ſolemnity of the place, as muſt have reduced them to ſpeak truth. The garden was not, in extent, equal to the ſize of the houſe; but what

what there was of it, was laid out in narrow gravel walks, then over-grown with weeds, bordered with box, and ornamented in quarters with yew ſwans, laurel bears, holly dogs, and box chickens; their colours happily variegated by the dead branches, which made up about three quarters of the animal, to the great eaſe of the gardener, who was, thereby, ſaved the care of watching over this his creation, leſt their ſhapes ſhould be deſtroyed by the irregular growth of ſome luxuriant branches. The wall of the garden was almoſt the extent of our proſpect. We were not in the ſeaſon for flowers; but had all the "perfumes "of Arabia" been diſperſed about the houſe, they could not have got the better of the ſtench ariſing from the moat.

You may imagine that our ſituation was better ſuited to the dark, than to the day; but in this you are miſtaken; for the horrors of the night exceeded all the diſmal proſpects the ſun could ſhew us. With the twilight our concert began. The

firſt performance was a great houſe-dog, that would ſuffer no noiſe but his own, inceſſantly howling or barking. Every hearth was full of crickets, who chirped the live-long night, but had none of thoſe lively notes which Milton celebrates as the ſound of mirth. The old towers of the houſe were filled with owls of every ſort, who, by their hoarſe hooting, and their ſhrill ſhrieking, bore no inconſiderable part in the concert, of which the froggery made the baſe. Theſe vocal performers were accompanied by all the modulations of a bleak winter's wind, which gathering in various paſſages of that rambling houſe, made a continual whiſtling, even in the mildeſt weather, roared in the chimneys, and blew in at a thouſand crevices in the ſhattered wainſcot.

Diſmal as this ſcene muſt appear, I found, that had I not retained very ſtrong affections for abſent objects, I could have been happy even there, if every face had not worn an air of wretchedneſs. Excluding the ſuffering

hours

hours of reflection, I was the only perſon in the place that did not appear in ſuch a deep and ſettled deſpondency, as made me fear that I ſhould, at ſome time, find all the family hanging in their garters; as I had learnt, that it was no uncommon thing in this kingdom for people to ſign their own paſſports into the next world as ſoon as they are tired of this.

A general melancholy run thro' every ſpecies: there was a monkey who was ſo infected by his ſituation, that he might have walked chief mourner at a funeral; a parrot, who, ceaſing to be articulate, uttered no ſound but that of a piteous ſigh. The ſervants had ſlit a magpy's tongue, in order to make it as converſible as themſelves, but had never been able to teach it any other words than heigh-ho! The kittens were there, from the hour of their birth, more ſerious than old cats, who have, in other places, been the inſeparable companions of antient virgins. There was not a lamb, colt, or any other creature, however youthful, that

that did not walk with more ſolemnity than an Archbiſhop in a publick proceſſion.

Poor Mrs. Herner was full as miſerable as myſelf or any of the inhabitants: grief had ſo relaxed every muſcle, that there were none but long faces in the houſe. Mrs. Herner's fell away very faſt, and, I dare ſay, had we ſtayed a month longer would have come up to the general ſtandard. I cannot but confeſs I felt mine lengthen conſiderably; tho' I was treated with great lenity by my goaler, who kindly ſtudied my eaſe and convenience, as far as the place would permit; but kept as ſtrictly to her vow of ſilence, as if it had been the road to ſalvation. The greateſt indulgence ſhe could grant me, was, in giving me leave to frequent a library, wherein I found ſome good hiſtories. Here, when I could baniſh reflection, and the regret which was the conſequence of it, I could, for ſome hours, enjoy the pleaſures of ſociety; and forgetting the lonely ſolitude to which I was confined, could tranſport myſelf to ſcenes of hurry and tumult,

tumult, and amuſe myſelf with a conſtant courſe of novelty. But it was ſeldom I could bring myſelf into a proper temper to taſte this pleaſure; and the ſeldomer, as the dampneſs of the place, joined with vexation and anxiety, ſoon affected my health.

The country around us was all quagmires and bogs, which rendered it impoſſible to take any exerciſe at that ſeaſon of the year, except in the melancholy garden; and though I had no objection to walking "with the "beaſt, joint tenant of the ſhade," yet I could not extend my love of ſociety to the reptile likewiſe; and the garden was ſo over-run with frogs and toads, that it was impoſſible to walk there without having multitudes of them for companions. This total want of exerciſe, I ſuppoſe, had ſome ſmall ſhare in impairing my conſtitution, having been always uſed to a contrary way of life: I was ſo ſenſible of ſuffering from it, that nothing but experience could convince me that there was no poſſibility of going beyond the moat; however, having been almoſt ſwallowed up

up in a bog, and giving my guard (for I was not permitted to ſtir without one) a violent cold, I had no great inclination for any further attempt; and leſs ſtill was any one inclined to accompany me.

We had not been many days in our ſolitude, before we received a viſit from Mr. South, a young clergyman in the neighbourhood; a very well bred, ſenſible, and worthy man, of an exceeding good family, and educated ſuitably to it; but being the younger of many brothers, he was glad to accept of a living near this place, though the manners of the neighbouring gentlemen were not agreeable to him. However, he converſed leſs with them than with his books, and the poor of the pariſh, whom he much viſited in order to inſtruct and guide their minds, and learn and relieve their neceſſities; for he denied himſelf many of the gratifications of life, in order to communicate to others the conveniences and comforts which they could not afford themſelves. He ſacrificed his money to their indigence,

and his time to their inſtruction; acting the part of ſchoolmaſter to the children, as well as that of a truly ſpiritual guide to their parents. From one of ſuch a diſpoſition every viſit muſt be welcome; and I could perceive, was not leſs ſo to Mrs. Herner than myſelf; for ſhe preſſed him to repeat them, which he did as often as his leiſure would permit; for to a man who ſo laborioufly performs his duty, a large pariſh is almoſt a conſtant employ; and, tho' we might ſoon perceive, and, I was afterwards more fully convinced, that his pleaſanteſt occupation was viſiting us, yet would he not ſuffer it to break in upon his duty.

I have already obſerved that Mr. South's viſits were agreeable, and your Ladyſhip will not think this ſo improbable as to require any farther aſſurance of it; but what will you ſay, if I own, that the love of talking rendered other company eligible, who had no other recommendation than taking the embargo off my ſpeech, and ſuffering me to export a few thoughts, with

with which I was overſtocked? Depraved appetites are apt to have ſtrange conſequences; the love of talking, to thoſe with whom we cannot converſe, argues great depravity of mind, and the reſult of it was, that I rejoiced at the arrival of ſome country neighbours, of whoſe intended viſit we had notice before they came, and as they were characters new and ſtrange to me, I will give you the account of them, which I learnt from Mr. South after their departure, as ſome excuſe for my being diverted with them; for novelty is allowed a right to entertain.

CHAP. XXXIII.

THE Marchioneſs of Trente was rendered a perſon of great conſequence to the ſportſmen in the neighbourhood, by the poſſeſſion of a very extenſive manor. And to the deſire of courting her favour we owed the viſits we received from three; by name, Mr. Rumford, Mr. Darking, and Mr. Giles. The two firſt were preceded by their wives, the latter by his wife and ſiſter; for the gentlemen did not think a viſit to two women a ſufficient recompence for giving up their uſual amuſements, and therefore hunted all the way between their houſe and ours, which ſeparated them from their families, who came early, to ſhew their deſire of being good neighbours. Mrs. Giles, and her ſiſter, Mrs. Martha Giles, ſat next me, and the former being of a communicative temper, was grown ſo very intimate with me, that when the gentlemen came in, ſhe was making me the confidant of her political ſentiments, beginning by an enquiry after the new pamphlets that had been lately publiſhed;

liſhed; "for that the nation was now "in ſuch imminent danger of loſing "its liberty, that ſhe could not help "being very deſirous to peruſe all the "ſchemes propoſed towards redreſſing "the grievances we laboured under;" adding, that "an additional induce-"ment was the hope that ſomeof them "might convince her ſiſter into how "many errors ſhe was led by her at-"tachment to a monarchial govern-"ment, which intirely blinded her "to all the bleſſings of a republic. "Miſs, would you believe," continued this female politician, "that ſhe is ſo "ſtrangely prejudiced, as to deteſt the "character of the great, the glorious "Oliver Cromwell; and will not allow "there is any tolerable reaſoning, or "indeed any thing but impious blaſ-"phemies, in the admirable books "written to prove that killing a ty-"rant is no murder. She grieves with "all the ſolemnity of affliction every "thirtieth of January, and is as incon-"ſolable as if the perſon ſhe moſt loves "was juſt expired. Then, Miſs, ſhe "is proportionably elated on the fatal "day wherein the glorious thread of

" Cromwell's life was cut; and old
" and aſthmatical as you ſee her, ſings
" and dances like a diſtracted thing;
" nor has complaiſance enough to me
" to conceal the leaſt part of her joy,
" though ſhe knows my ſoul is then
" overwhelmed with ſorrow. Never
" believe me, Miſs, if her room is
" not hung round with the pictures,
" in her phraſe, of the bleſſed martyrs,
" and yet really, in other things, ſiſter
" Giles is a good ſort of a woman;
" and were it not for theſe prejudices,
" which ſhe has imbibed from the ſer-
" vile notions of thoſe that educated
" her, I ſhould have been very happy
" in her friendſhip; but ignorant of
" the charms of glorious liberty, ſhe is
" as little able to bear my more exten-
" ſive view of things, as I am to endure
" her narrowneſs of mind."

Mr. Giles, it ſeems, knew his ſiſter too well to be in doubt of the ſubject on which he ſaw her ſo very loquacious, and cried out, " what, you're teizing
" Miſs with your politics, I ſuppoſe;
" what the devil have women to do
" with the nation! You want a petti-
" coat government, I warrant? Was I

" King,

" King, I would make an univerſal Sa-
" lic law, that ſhould not allow you
" the government of your own lap-
" dogs."

" Really brother," replied Mrs. Martha, " you but expoſe yourſelf by de-
" claring your averſion to the moſt in-
" tereſting of ſubjects. However mean-
" ly you may think of my ſex, I muſt
" inform you that my views are no-
" bler than your's; and if you are con-
" tented to move in no higher a ſphere
" than the dominion over your ſtable
" or dog-kennel, I find my genius
" leads me to reflect on the beſt man-
" ners of ruling a ſtate; I cannot help
" being anxious to ſee how things are
" ordered at the helm."

" Helm!" exclaimed the Squire; " ſteer your family; ſee if you are
" pilot enough to guide that in its
" proper courſe. Go to your diſtaff;
" the proper female ſceptre. However
" trifling you may think the command
" of my dog-kennel, I would not truſt
" you with the government of it, though
" I had not ſo valuable a bitch as Mop-
" ſey, who deſerves the care of the
" greateſt man in the nation."

With a look of the moſt ſovereign contempt, as diſdaining to return an anſwer, ſhe turned her back to him, and whiſpered me, "this is always "his way, Miſs; would it not pro-"voke a Saint? But this is the con-"ſequence of having an underſtand-"ing more cultivated than the illi-"terate neighbourhood one has the "misfortune to be born in; people to-"tally ignorant of the policies of na-"tions. Their pride will not allow "one any peace. He does not treat "liſter Giles with any more ceremony, "and, between you and I Miſs (but "one would not have thoſe things "repeated) ſhe once reſented this be-"haviour ſo much, that they were go-"ing to part upon it, and ſhe and I "were to have lived together, remov-"ing to ſome place where we might "have converſed with perſons of more "refined underſtandings; but while "they were bartering about the terms "of a ſeparate maintenance, a poli-"tical diſpute aroſe between her "and myſelf, which convinced me "ſo fully of the impoſſibility of "ever bringing her to reaſon on that "ſubject,

" ſubject, that I declared againſt liv-
" ing with her, and a reconciliation
" between them enſued."

I know not when my political friend would have done talking, had ſhe not been interrupted by Mrs. Darking, who came up to me, and enquired after the reigning diverſions in London; expreſſing great joy at ſeeing one " who was
" come from among chriſtians, and
" compaſſionating me for having left
" them for a land of brutes."

Mrs. Herner, before any company came, adviſed me on no account to mention my being brought thither by force? but to pretend that a deſire of accompany her, during her ſtay there, was my motive. Though I was ſenſible my taſte would not receive much honour from this concealment, yet, as it was my intereſt not to offend her, and I perceived no advantage likely to accrue from refuſing to comply, I told her, that as far as ſilence would give my detention the air of choice, I had no objection; but ſhe muſt excuſe my intimating a falſhood, much more my telling a palpable untruth. I now found ſhe took this

office on herſelf; for upon hearing Mrs. Darking's condolances, ſhe told her "I was not worthy her pity, ſince I "had been ſo kind as to give her my "company from the deſire of retiring "from the hurry of London."

This gave Mr. Darking an opportunity of exultation, crying out, "there's "a wiſe young woman now! So much "wiſdom in youth is marvellous. "What a happy man her huſband will "be, if marriage does not alter her "as much as it did my fool. See Bet-"ty, how much a *betterer* figure that "young gentlewoman makes than "thee do with all thy whims, thy fi-"garies, and nonſenſical fancies and "whinings."

Mrs. Darking anſwered with an indolent air, "that the young Lady "would be a better judge of her own "taſte, when ſhe had lived a little "among brutes." With a contemptuous ſmile and ſignificant glance, which very intelligibly told him he was ſignified under the laſt word of her ſpeech.

This Lady, I afterwards learnt, had been bred in town; where, for a puniſhment

niſhment of his ſins, Mr. Darking was called by a law ſuit, in which he was engaged with a gentleman who had hunted and killed a hare in his manor.

While he was in London, he met with this lady, who, deſtitute of fortune, lived with a maiden aunt, of a temper by no means eaſy, and whoſe ſole ſupport was an annuity. The neceſſity of finding ſome more certain proviſion made her omit no endeavours to pleaſe; and ſo general were her views, that her ſentiments changed with every unmarried man's opinion; whatever he ſeemed to like ſhe immediately became.

This conformable diſpoſition led her to declare a deteſtation of a town life, whenever Mr. Darking was in company; and ſo ſucceſsfully did ſhe expatiate on the ſweet innocence and tranquil regularity enjoyed in the country, that he was convinced her conformity to the gaieties of London was a painful neceſſity, from which ſhe ſighed to be delivered. He had been a good deal captivated by her beauty, from the firſt time he had ſeen her,

and

and this amiable diſpoſition compleated her conqueſt. But ſtill warily determined to be certain of the happineſs which he was inclined to think muſt be the conſequence of his poſſeſſing ſuch a wife, he examined into her knowledge of family affairs, and was charmed to hear her talk of the inſpecting a dairy, and the well ordering a family, as the greateſt pleaſures in life, and as things in which ſhe was well ſkilled. All his doubts being diſpelled, he ventured to make his propoſals; and thro' meer œconomy overlooked her want of fortune. He had been early taught that wholeſome precept, that "a penny "ſaved is a penny got;" and learnedly arguing on that principle, convinced himſelf that ſo good a houſewife was the beſt treaſure, ſince no extraordinary ſettlements were demanded in conſideration of a woman's virtues; and therefore his eſtate would not be tied up as if he married a great fortune; and from hence he drew a concluſion in her favour, that, "money ſaved was "money got."

Mr.

Mr. Darking was not made to wait long for the Lady's conſent: they had proverbs on their ſide, as much in recommendation of a ſpeedy marriage, as he had; there was no text on which the old aunt was more eloquent than "that delays are dangerous;" "thoſe "that will not when they may, &c." "A bird in the hand is worth two in "the buſh," and ſome others to that purpoſe; mortifying experience having ſo fully convinced her of the juſtneſs of them, that ſhe rivalled the renowned Sancho Pancho in retailing of proverbs. As ſoon as Mr. Darking was married, he conducted his bride to the country for which he had ſighed; where he found that reflection is ſo infallible a ſource of wiſdom, that he might have acquired ſome from his favourite amuſements, which would have taught him that the fowler never ſpreads the nets after having caught the birds. All the ſnares ſhe laid for him appeared henceforward uſeleſs: art was now diſclaimed; ſhe freely ſhewed her diſlike of every thing ſhe had declared herſelf fond of; laughed

at his friends, deſpiſed his neighbours, deteſted country entertainments, never thought of œconomy, but to ſhew ſhe ſcorned ſuch trifles and low offices, and grew vapoured and peeviſh.

Mr. Darking was not ſo blinded by love, but that he grew outrageous at this diſappointment; for however blind Cupid may be repreſented, the Hymeneal torch lights him ſo well, as to render him admirably quick-ſighted to the faults of a wedded mate. Cupid, as your Ladyſhip muſt have perceived, in many inſtances, before he becomes linked by Hymen, is generally as different from what he is after that union, as a bee and a ſerpent: in the firſt ſtate, his whole application is to gather ſweets from every thing; there is not a circumſtance but he can make to produce ſomething valuable; but, after this melancholy change, he as induſtriouſly collects poiſon; and, in the ſmalleſt trifles can diſcover baleful qualities. If I was to undergo a metamorphoſis, it ſhould be of a bee into a ſerpent, as an allegorical deſcription of the transformation of a lover into a huſ-

a huſband; a more diſmal change than that of the induſtrious Arachne into a ſpider, the melancholy Philomela into a plaintive nightingale, or any other that Ovid celebrates. But to put an end to a digreſſion which no one, from her own fate, has ſo little reaſon to make as myſelf, I ſhall return to this ill-matched pair.

As Mr. Darking was not bleſſed with delicacy of voice or manners, his rage broke forth into ſounds ſo harſh, and geſtures ſo alarming, as greatly terrified the gentle Lady, and made her determine to endeavour to comply with his inclination. But, during the trial, his dairy was ſpoiled through neglect and ignorance; his family and viſitors half-ſtarved; for which he received no other apology than "how ſhould ſhe "gueſs that the vulgar robuſt animals "would devour whole hecatombs;" and all regularity was baniſhed from his houſe; the order for dinner being often forgot till the time it ſhould have been ready.—He tried to make her uſeful by the ſame means as he had brought her to attempt to obey him, but

but finding it eaſier to fright than to alter her, he gave her up as incorrigible; deſiring her to reſign the management of his houſe, and keep within the confines of her own apartment.

Not long after this, Mrs. Darking proved with child, which reſtored her to her huſband's favour, as it ſhewed her of ſome uſe. She perceived, by his behaviour, how much he was intereſted in the fate of the unborn babe, and therefore made it the means of acquiring ſome indulgencies which otherwiſe would not have been granted to her. She daily encroached on the liberties thus obtained, till, at laſt, ſhe ventured to expreſs a longing to lie-in in London, which, if diſappointed, ſhe feared might prove fatal to the child. Mr. Darking would have been truly alarmed had he believed it could be marked with the repreſentation of any part of a town he ſo much hated; but never having heard of that effect from any ſuch longing, he refuſed to comply, ſwearing "no child "of his ſhould breathe that pernicious "air; he had ſuffered enough by go-

"ing

" ing thither to make him careful to " be the laſt of his family who ſhould " ever run themſelves into any ſuch " ſcrape." But finding his lady ſickened, from the ſteadineſs with which he had adhered to this reſolution, he began to be under ſome apprehenſions for the conſequences; ſo to make her eaſier, he promiſed to carry her there as ſoon as ſhe was recovered from her lying-in. This aſſurance kept up her ſpirits ſo well, that it enabled her to bring into the world a fine boy, who was joyfully received by his father; but the journey to London expired at the child's birth. It was a promiſe Mr. Darking never meant to keep, nor could he be induced to perform it by her falling ill on the diſappointment; her health was no longer of importance.

She had ſeveral more children; but found that her pregnancy was not to meet with the ſame indulgencies after the valuable heir apparent was born. Mr. Darking had the children brought up wild. Though the two youngeſt were daughters, yet he would not permit

mit a maid ſervant to come near them, except juſt to put on their cloaths; the greateſt part of their time was ſpent in the ſtables, and the ſtable-boys were their play-fellows.

The poor wife, who was in the contrary extreme, being the exceſs of delicacy, and thought a girl ought not to ſet eyes even on a baby that was not of the feminine gender, looked on compliance in this point as criminal; from which aroſe a never ceaſing conteſt between her and her huſband, whereby the children were the innocent ſufferers. Each ordered them to rebel againſt the commands of the other; ſhe chaſtiſed them if they obeyed their father, and he (as he called it) *trounced* them, if they complied with their mother; till, by the double application of that great inſtructor, the rod, they ſoon grew ſo exceeding wiſe, as to deſpiſe both their parents, learning from each the other's foibles and errors much ſooner than their own underſtandings could have diſcovered them.

Mrs. Rumford, the only Lady that now remains unmentioned, was much better

better ſuited to her ſituation. Nature ſeemed to have formed her for the care of her houſe and dairy; and had not Mr. Rumford declared her to be the wife of his boſom, one might have taken her for his cook or his dairy-maid; though poetry has been ſo much the friend of the latter claſs, that to have gueſſed her one would have been no ſmall compliment. She was as much charmed with my ſuppoſed love of the country as Mr. Darking, and was very eloquent in behalf of the pleaſures of domeſtick buſineſs. My regard for truth would ſcarcely ſuffer me to receive the praiſes given me with ſo little reaſon; and I believe I ſhould not have permitted them to continue in their error, could I have prevailed on myſelf to have expoſed any one to ſo much contempt as I imagined Mrs. Herner muſt have incurred from being convicted of telling a voluntary lie.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIV.

A VERY conſiderable part of the company yet remains unmentioned, though perhaps were the men to direct, I might have given them the precedency. Theſe were the Squires faithful companions, their dogs, who followed them into the room, which they entered with a loud cry of halloo, halloo! that at firſt greatly alarmed me; but ſeeing no emotion in the countenance of any other perſon in company, and finding Mrs. Martha did not ſuſpend her cares for the nation, I was ſenſible my fears muſt be groundleſs. Mrs. Herner knew too well the regard due to theſe dogs to expel them her dining room; the conſequence of which was, its being ſo filled with them, that there was no moving without treading upon one, falling over another, and making confuſion among them all, they ſnarling and growling at every one who was ſo unlucky as to tread on them; while the Squires,

to

to increaſe the clamour, cried out, ware Hector, ware Juno! according to the names of the dogs in danger.

Dinner at laſt appeared; at the ſight of a ſirloin of beef, the Squire ſet up what I found they called the dead halloo, and cried out, "to-un boys, to-un; "the beſt beaſt in Chriſtendom, though "he would give but a ſcurvy chaſe;" and while the ladies were ceremoniouſly adjuſting the important article of place, ſat themſelves at the table obſerving, that "the firſt cut of a ſirloin of "beef was better than the fineſt "compliments in the world." As ſoon as dinner was ended, the chaſe was celebrated, the ſtag once more run down, all its arts for eſcape remembered, the victory of the dogs ſung in ſongs of triumph, every victor receiving his diſtinct praiſes and careſſes. When the ſtag was killed in ſtory, as well as in fact, and all the ſongs on the ſubject had been ſung, with voices that equalled the hoarſe thunder, one of the gentlemen whiſpered another, "let's roaſt the parſon," to which his neighbour replied, ſealing his approbation

bation with an oath, " I will begin to " run the rig on him." And accordingly much impertinence was applied to Mr. South, by way of wit, which he received with great inſenſibility, only giving them two or three very cutting anſwers in return; but his wit being too refined, and too juſt to be comprehended by them, Mrs. Herner, who I began to perceive was more than commonly affected with Mr. South's merit, thought it time to retire, aſking him to drink tea with us. He readily conſented; and riſing from table with us, they cried out, " fine " parſon! efaith, always ſtick by the " women. Nay, thou haſt a good " taſte; ſhe's worth a chace!" " but " take care thee does not catch a tar- " tar," added Mr. Darking. Every one underſtood me to be the perſon hinted at in this ſpeech, which rendered me the more glad to leave theſe ungentlemanlike gentlemen. As ſoon as we were out of the room, they ſet up another halloo, crying, " clear, clear!" which informed us, that they were not leſs rejoiced at our abſence than we were

were at having got rid of ſuch irrational ſociety.

Mr. South told me that we had judged very well in retiring ſo ſoon, for the next ſtep towards driving us out of the room would have been their entering into ſuch diſcourſe as no women of modeſty could without great impropriety ſit to hear. This greatly aſtoniſhed me; I did not ſuſpect any perſon of ſuch brutality; I thought politeneſs was not requiſite to teach people decency; common ſenſe alone, I imagined, might ſhew that it was brutal to ſay what any one ought not to hear. But more ſtill have I been ſince ſurprized, at finding this vice, for I cannot give a breach of ſo amiable a virtue as modeſty a gentler name, was too common in circles that call themſelves polite; but ſurely without reaſon, ſince nothing can be ſo contrary to politeneſs as an offence againſt decency. Our viſitors did not leave us till the gentlemen were ſo far overpowered by the potency of Mrs. Herner's good October, that they were with difficulty ſet upon their horſes; but thoſe

thoſe animals, much ſuperior to the brutes that rode them, conveyed their unworthy loads ſafe home.

Your Ladyſhip, perhaps, by this time may find it eaſy to be tired of ſuch company, therefore will not wonder if I did not wiſh them to repeat their viſits often, as when they ceaſed to be new they muſt become more dull than ſolitude.

After a month ſpent in this old caſtle, I began to grow impatient of confinement, and almoſt to deſpair of making my eſcape; but my uneaſineſs was ſtill greatly increaſed one morning, by Mrs. Herner's ſhewing me a letter from the Marchioneſs, in which ſhe related to her, as ſhe termed it, "the happy "conſequence of removing me out of "Lord Dorcheſter's ſight." She there informed her, that "he looked melan-"choly for a few days after my de-"parture; but ſoon began, by de-"grees, to recover his gaiety, and "with it, his inclination towards her. "Convinced, by experience, how little "he liked reſerve in a woman he loved, "ſhe had not endeavoured to conceal

"the

" the ſentiments of her heart; and
" they ſo well agreed with his, that in
" a few days they were to be married,
" waiting only for the neceſſary prepa-
" rations." She then proceeded to ſay,
" that ſhe was no longer under any un-
" eaſineſs concerning me; a thouſand
" inſtances having aſſured her that Lord
" Dorcheſter was become totally indif-
" ferent towards my future fate; and
" had even expreſſed himſelf glad that
" he was delivered, he knew not how,
" of one who began to grow burden-
" ſome to him. But yet, as ſhe pitied
" my youth, and was ſenſible how hard
" it muſt be for an unexperienced girl
" to reſiſt ſuch a man as Lord Dorches-
" ter, it grieved her heart (*too full of*
" *the milk of human kindneſs*) to think
" I ſhould be left quite deſtitute of a
" ſubſiſtence, expoſed to the wide world
" and all its villainy, which might lead
" me into courſes that would prove the
" deſtruction of my *precious ſoul.* She
" therefore could not forbear giving
" way to the overflowings of her hu-
" manity, generoſity and compaſſion,
" in offering me the ſame income which

" ſhe had tendered me before I left
" London, if I would bind myſelf, by
" a lawful contract, to relinquiſh it if I
" came within 40 miles of London, or
" of his Lordſhip's country ſeat; for
" tho' ſhe was no longer jealous, yet
" ſhe could not bear to ſee Lord Dor-
" cheſter's happineſs interrupted by the
" whining complaints or reproaches of
" a woman who would call herſelf ru-
" ined by him, tho' her own frailty was
" moſt in fault."

The ſhock this letter gave me, was at firſt inexpreſſible. I could not ſupport the very ſound of Lord Dorcheſter's indifference. I knew not how to believe he was weary of me. I thought no one could diſſemble ſo well; for he had appeared more fond of me, more delighted with me than ever, but juſt before this cruel ſeparation. My mind was in too great an agitation to return Mrs. Herner any anſwer. She ſeemed to pity me, for my diſtreſs was very viſible, and would have beſtowed upon me a lecture on patience and reſignation, had ſhe been allowed the liberty of ſpeech; but after a very eloquent beginning, ſhe

was

was ſtopped ſhort by recollecting the Marchioneſs's prohibition, and obſerved, "her compaſſion had led her into for-"getfulneſs."

I was never ſo well pleaſed with Lady Trente's commands as on this occaſion; a perſon who is deeply afflicted can but ill bear the dull inſipid nonſenſe of an inſenſible preacher; when the heart ſpeaks loudly, who can liſten to a diſcourſe dictated by a cold imagination. I prevailed on Mrs. Herner to give me Lady Trente's letter; and, after having renewed the firſt agonies of my grief by a ſecond peruſal, a plentiful flood of tears came to my relief, and ſo far quieted my mind, that I began to diſcover reaſons to ſuſpect the truth of this account. I was little diſpoſed to believe the Marchioneſs was ſo very full of the *milk of human kindneſs* as ſhe pretended, nor that one who had ſo little conſideration for the eaſe of my body, and the peace of my mind in this world, could have ſo tender a regard for my ſoul, and my happineſs in the next. The deſire of buying my abſence from Lord Dorcheſter, was a ſuſpicious circumſtance;

and I thought this all might be a fiction formed on a ſuppoſition that my aim was to marry my Lord, and therefore I might the more readily comply with her propoſals, if I could be perſuaded all poſſibility of the completion of my hopes were at an end.

This ſcheme, like all others that are built on falſe foundations, could not anſwer the intent. My views were narrower, and more humble; I thought not of marriage; to preſerve his friendſhip and enjoy his converſation was the utmoſt extent of my ambition; and this I flattered myſelf I might do, ſhould another woman become his wife. But I muſt, in ſincerity, confeſs, that the notion of his marrying was moſt tormenting to me. To be his friend while no one had a ſtronger tie on his affections, ſatisfied my wiſhes; but if he had a wife, I was ſenſible I ought to reſign even the deſire of retaining the firſt place in his heart. This was a ſelf-denial that required a ſtronger mind or weaker affection than I poſſeſſed.

The declining ſtate of my health would have rendered me little able to ſupport

ſupport the anxiety of my mind, had not the hopes I conceived that the whole was a fiction, proved a moſt reviving cordial to my ſpirits. This reſtored me to life, tho' not to eaſe; but my fears and doubts made me more grieved than ever at my captivity; and as my impatience for the means of eſcaping from this priſon was encreaſed, it was mortifying to me to give an anſwer to the Marchioneſs's propoſals, which would rather quicken than relax Mrs. Herner's watchfulneſs. This, I knew, muſt be the conſequence of a refuſal; but obliged to declare myſelf, what could I do? My deſire of liberty inſpired me with courage enough to dare any thing but a violation of truth; there I was ſtill a coward; for I could not think myſelf juſtified in repelling wickedneſs by wickedneſs. The falſhood of others could not be a ſanction for it in me.

Mrs. Herner, at laſt, broke thro' her vow of ſilence, in order to uſe all the arguments her underſtanding could ſuggeſt, and her inclination ſtrengthen, to perſuade me to accept the conditions

offered me. The goaler, in this caſe, led as melancholy a life as the priſoner, and ſhe longed almoſt as much to be diſmiſſed from her charge as I did to be out of her power. The poor woman was half dead of the vapours, and, I believe, would not have ſurvived it had not Mr. South's company afforded her relief; for whenever he appeared ſhe was as happy as envy of the particular attention he paid to me could ſuffer her to be; and tho' I would not, in general, recommend jealouſy as very conducive to mental or bodily health, yet it certainly would be of great ſervice in a ſituation that ſtagnates the blood, without ſome ſuch animating paſſion to continue its circulation.

I could not but confeſs it was pity that "one who ſpoke ſo well, ſhould "ever ſpeak in vain;" but what ſucceſs could attend it, had ſhe been endowed with the moſt perſuaſive eloquence: an orator places his hopes in moving our paſſions, and to make them of his party is his ſole aim; it is no affront, therefore, to her rhetoric, that it

it ſhould fail, when it was directed againſt the moſt invincible paſſion. After the good woman had talked herſelf hoarſe, I repeated what I had firſt told her, "that no offers could "tempt me to ſell Lord Dorcheſter's "friendſhip; but if I was permitted "to judge for myſelf, and found "him in reality as indifferent as the "Marchioneſs repreſented him, I "ſhould fly far enough from one "whoſe inconſtancy muſt render the "ſight of him painful, without putting "her to any expence."

I thought her Ladyſhip in a great error, when ſhe ſuppoſed poverty might prove ſo dangerous to the ſtate of my ſoul; I did not comprehend her meaning; and as far as I had been able to obſerve, luxury led people into more vices than neceſſity. Experience had then ſhewn me, that

The devil, grown wiſer than of yore,
Tempts men by making rich, not poor.

I was under no apprehenſion that want of virtue could be the conſequence of want of money, and, therefore, ſaw no ſufficient inducement to accept any from one who had ſo cruelly injured me.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

MR. South had omitted writing to us for more days than uſual; having, as we learned, been prevented by a friend who had ſpent a little time with him; but during this increaſe of my anxiety, he came one morning to breakfaſt; his particular enquiries after my health, ſhewed me that he perceived an alteration in it. The day being fine, we went together into the garden, where we had not walked long, when he intimated a deſire to ſpeak with Mrs. Herner alone. His countenance had ſhewn confuſion, his thoughts wandered, and his converſation had been ſtrained and unconnected from the time of his firſt coming in. I pitied him, from a belief that he laboured under ſome uneaſineſs; and pains of the mind could not then fail of exciting my compaſſion. I was now more convinced that he had ſome diſtreſs to impart; and having heard him whiſper his requeſt for a private audience, I walked

from them, and thinking myſelf at a ſufficient diſtance, ſat down at the bottom of an old yew tree, which time had rendered hollow, and frequently ſerved me for a well ſheltered ſeat.

But, as the God of Laughter would have it, Mrs. Herner brought her gentleman to a bench full in my view. I obſerved her eyes rather twinkling than ſparkling, every feature wore a ſmile, and ſhe had pulled up her head till ſhe was as upright as a may-pole.

After they were ſeated, and ſhe had bluſhed, drawn down her handkerchief, ſtroaked her ruffles, pinched her apron, and played over all the pretty airs of confuſion, finding he did not break ſilence, ſhe, as I could perceive, with great heſitation and difficulty, enquired his reaſon for deſiring this interview; her words were breathed in a voice too gentle for me to hear, but her manner explained them.

Mr. South did not ſeem to ſpeak with more facility, nor in a ſound more audible. I could not divine his meaning, but ſaw him confounded, and in a tremor; however, the firſt effort paſſed,

paſſed, he grew more eaſy; but in proportion as his countenance expreſſed greater pleaſure, her's ſhewed leſs. His eyes petitioned; but as his became more tender and humble, her's ſhot forth fiercer rays, her cheeks glowed with a higher red, and loſing all that ſweet complacency of feature with which ſhe at firſt liſtened to him, ſhe roſe from her ſeat, and anger giving ſtrength to her voice, I could very diſtinctly hear her thus addreſs him: "Is this the mighty ſecret for which "you wanted a private audience? "You did well, indeed, to deſire it "private; ſuch an abject thought "ſhould be known by as few as poſ-"ſible. In love in ſo ſhort a time! "and with a baby face; a little white "and red, and perhaps ſome pretty "features! A child, not able to know "the duties incumbent on a wife and "the miſtreſs of a houſe! To marry "her would diſgrace your family, con-"taminate your profeſſion, diſhonour "your cloth, and bring certain ruin "on yourſelf. Such wilful blindneſs "deſerves not a guide; but I will be

"one

" one to you, and preſerve you from
" the perdition you court."

Mr. South interrupted her at this expreſſion of unwiſhed-for regard; I could not diſtinguiſh his words, but he had the air of a moſt melancholy and humble ſuppliant, which proved unavailing, for Mrs. Herner again broke forth. " Fye, fye; is it ſeemly for one
" whoſe example and preaching ſhould
" teach the world to mortify and deny
" themſelves, to overcome their paſ-
" ſions? Is it decent for ſuch a one
" to chuſe a wife for a little tranſitory
" beauty? What will people ſay when
" you are exhorting them to abſti-
" nence; but that, after having pro-
" vided every gratification for your-
" ſelf, after indeed abſtaining from all
" that is leſs tempting, and thinking
" it virtue, you triumph over them
" who practice leſs ſelf-indulgence,
" tho', perhaps, more lawfully? Does
" not your profeſſion teach you to
" ſearch after more ſublime beauties;
" thoſe of the mind? Moral charms
" alone ſhould be regarded by a mi-
" niſter of our ſacred religion. Has
" not

" not the wiſe Solomon told you, that " favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain, " but the woman that feareth the Lord, " ſhe ſhall be praiſed? Does he not " ſay, that the price of a virtuous wo- " man is above rubies? Such you " might have found," ſoftening her voice; " you might have met with wo- " men who have been tried in the world, " like gold in the fire, and paſſed thro' " it unſullied; whoſe minds are formed " by a competence of years, and their " hearts purified by knowledge and " care; who have been taught by ex- " perience to value true merit" (caſting glances at him which ſhe deſigned ſhould be languiſhing, but ſeemed more expreſ- ſive of ſtupidity); " one qualified to be " friend, companion, and help-mate; " one who would nurſe you when ſick, " obey you when well, and live up to " a true ſenſe of her duty; and all this " with rank and family that would not " have debaſed you in the eyes of the " world. This, I ſay, you might have " found." And here ſhe ſtopped, as if to ſee whether a deſcription ſhe meant for her own picture, would warm him to any kind thoughts of the original; but he,

he, with ſome indignation in his countenance, anſwered, "I think I have "found it all in your friend; I have too "much faith in phyſiognomy to doubt "it; her's expreſſes every thing that is "amiable in the moſt legible and charming characters." "I ſee what you are," interrupted Mrs. Herner, with a voice ſtill louder than before; "the man gets "the better of your divine ſoul; we may "now no longer wonder that the ſheep "wander out of the right path, ſince "the ſhepherd himſelf goes aſtray; and "tho' obliged to purify human nature, "is ſinking to the brute, and not only "withdrawing himſelf from his obedience to religion, but even to reaſon. "While you are thus a ſlave to your "appetites, continued ſhe, you are below the beaſts of the field, and as "ſuch, not fit company for me; but I "ſhall take care to lead temptation out "of your way, ſince you have not ſufficiency of virtue to reſiſt it. You "ſhall no more ſee this painted baby, "this fleſhly idol, now the ſole object "of your devotion." With this menace ſhe left him; nor did he endeavour to detain her, but ſeemed all amazement.

I ſat

I ſat ſtill, in hopes of remaining unobſerved. I ſuſpected myſelf to be meant under the flattering appellation of painted baby, that pernicious evil ſhe had been deſcribing, and had no deſire to reverſe her ſentence, though I eſteemed the man. But paſſing by the place where I ſat, he perceived me, and coming up with great confuſion in his manner, would have ſat down by me. I had been detained there too long, from a deſire of being concealed, and was grown very cold, therefore choſe to walk. With great difficulty he ſtammered out, "he had been entreating "Mrs. Herner to offer him and his for-"tune to me. He feared I ſhould "accuſe him of preſumption if he at-"tempted to make ſo poor an offering "without the mediation of a friend; "but ſhe had reduced him to it, for "he had no hopes of her aſſiſtance." He then gave me an exact account of his fortune and income, ſaying every thing that was tender, generous and delicate on the ſubject, with ſuch fear and humility, that I was grieved at being obliged to humble him ſtill more,

by

by a refuſal, which, however, I endeavoured to palliate as much as poſſible. "I acknowledged the obligation his "good opinion conferred on me; aſ-"ſuring him of my eſteem, but that I "could not think of marriage; were not "this a literal truth, he might be ſure "I ſhould not except to his offer; for "my ſituation was extremely unhappy, "but I could not change it for the mar-"ried ſtate, tho' I was there a priſoner, "moſt unjuſtly ſeized by force, and de-"tained againſt my will with the ut-"moſt vigilance and care."

While I was uttering theſe laſt words, Mrs. Herner appeared, and with a degree of rage not natural to her diſpoſition (but jealouſy can work wonders) inquired, "what I meant by remain-"ing in the garden?" commanding me to go into the houſe. I was ſo ſhocked with the concern I had given Mr. South, which he ſeemed rather to endeavour to conceal than to ſhew, that I was glad to obey her; but he catching hold of my hand, entreated me to finiſh what I was ſaying, and explain a myſtery which filled him with aſtoniſh-

ment

ment. I eaſily underſtood that by this he meant the impriſonment I had ſlightly touched upon; but I could not make a farther explanation before Mrs. Herner, nor did ſhe give me time; for telling him, that "it was unbecoming a "miniſter of the goſpel to give way to "his paſſions," ſhe led me into the houſe, out of which I was not ſuffered to ſtir that day.

Mrs. Herner had never beheld me with ſuch looks of anger as ſhe gave me after this affair; ſhe was frequently in tears; and made me partake of her ſorrow, by being the victim of her ill humour. Her jealouſy added ſo much to the cruel effects of the Marchioneſs's commands, that I was ſo ſtrictly watched (at a time when I more than ever longed for liberty in order to examine into the truth of Lady Trente's letter) that three days paſſed before the gardener, who had been bribed into Mr. South's intereſt, could give me the following letter:

"MADAM,

"Though you deny me the hopes "of reward, you have not deprived me

"of

" of all pleaſure, ſince you cannot be ſo
" cruel as to refuſe me that of attempt-
" ing to reſcue you. To know that
" you are detained by force, is ſufficient
" to excite my endeavours to deliver
" you from your impriſonment; and
" happy ſhall I eſteem myſelf, if in this
" I can ſucceed, tho' it be attended
" with the greateſt misfortune to my-
" ſelf, the never ſeeing you again. As
" ſoon as you are in ſafety, I will im-
" plicitly obey your commands, even
" tho' they ſhould require me to leave
" you for ever; more bleſſed with the
" pleaſing recollection of having contri-
" buted to your happineſs than any thing
" but your hand can make me; in your
" refuſing which I have not a pretence
" to accuſe you of cruelty; it is but
" juſtice; ſince I can plead no other re-
" commendation to your favour than
" the neceſſary conſequence of knowing
" you, and the being, with the ſincereſt
" reſpect, and warmeſt affection and
" admiration, your moſt devoted,
" obedient ſervant,
" HENRY SOUTH."

This

This letter, at the ſame time afforded me pleaſure and uneaſineſs. I had been obſerving all the ſervants, in order to find out among them an eye of pity and humanity for one diſtreſſed, as they muſt perceive me to be, in hopes of contriving my eſcape by their aſſiſtance, could I prevail on them to give me ſuch eſſential proofs of their compaſſion. This event ſhewed me that the gardener, who was the laſt in my thoughts, muſt be the foundation of my ſcheme. I had little reaſon to ſuppoſe he thought of me; but the office he had undertaken for Mr. South proved he was acceſſible in ſome avenues to his heart; and from what I had learned by converſation, I imagined avarice to be the quality moſt likely to ſtand my friend; to this, therefore, I reſolved to have recourſe, and fortunately was provided with a ſum ſufficient to gratify ſuch a motive in one whoſe terms were not very high.

But ſtill I had many difficulties to encounter. I could not recompence him for the loſs of his place, which muſt prove the conſequence of being known to

to have aſſiſted me in my eſcape; and yet where to go without a guide, if I got clear from the caſtle, I knew not. Theſe conſiderations diſtreſſed me. They might have been obviated by putting myſelf under Mr. South's protection; but how could I make a man of his worth ſubſervient to my intereſt, and diſappoint him of the reward which no generoſity could prevent his hoping from ſuch a ſervice, tho' it might not ſuffer him to preſs what he would think, in gratitude, his due. I could not procure my own gratification but by his diſappointment; and my firſt reſolution was to write him an anſwer, which I will, as nearly as my memory will permit, repeat to your Ladyſhip.

" How ardently ſoever I may wiſh " for liberty, I cannot conſent to re- " ceive it from one to whom I can make " no return. No captivity can be ſo " grievous to me as the ſenſe of obli- " gations which it will never be in my " power to repay. I muſt intreat you " not to deliver me from my impriſon- " ment, to fetter me with ingratitude; " nor to add any farther proofs of a re-

" gard

" gard I ſo little deſerve. Your gene-
" rous and kind intentions can never be
" effaced from my memory; nor ſhall
" I ever ceaſe to wiſh your happineſs
" and proſperity may be equal to your
" merit, and the juſt ſenſe I have of it:
" I can never give you a right to ex-
" pect a heart which it is not in my
" power to give, and to which your
" merits alone are too good a title."

When I delivered this epiſtle to the gardener, he informed me that Mr. South had made ſeveral unſucceſsful attempts to ſee me; and finding them vain, had applied to him to deliver me his letter; adding many other things in order to move my compaſſion, by the uneaſineſs under which he repreſented him, or to pleaſe me by deſcribing ſymptoms of an affection in Mr. South, which from my readineſs to enter into a correſpondence, I ſuppoſe, he thought very agreeable to me.

I liſtened patiently, for fear of offending a man from whom I hoped to receive the bleſſing of liberty; but did not dare to venture a hint of my deſign at that time, leſt it ſhould be delivered

to

to Mr. South with my letter, and I be obliged to him, contrary to my inclination.

I had the good fortune to meet with the gardener alone the next day: he told me he had given my epiſtle to Mr. South, who ſeemed ſo ſorry, poor gentleman, it grieved his heart to ſee him. Time was too precious for me to ſuffer him to ſpend it in expreſſing his compaſſion; I therefore offered the bribe I intended, and promiſed ſecreſy and prudence.

The man ſeemed ſtrongly charmed with the ſight of the gold which I expoſed to his view in order to ſtrengthen the temptation, and he engaged to anſwer my hopes, if it could be contrived without his being diſcovered as a party in it, and aſſured me of uſing his utmoſt endeavour to effect it. We agreed on an hour of meeting again, when he ſhould be able to impart his ſucceſs; I charged him to keep the affair a ſecret from Mr. South; and we parted with a great increaſe of content on both ſides, he enjoying, in imagination, the offered gold, and I my liberty.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

MRS. Herner's vigilance would not ſuffer me to hear the gardener's ſucceſs at the time appointed; but I was too induſtrious in ſeeking an opportunity of ſpeaking, to be long prevented, and I had the inexpreſſible joy to learn that he had formed a practicable ſcheme. I liſtened with eagerneſs to every particular; but when I found my firſt ſtep was to be on a ladder, I confeſs I trembled. As the doors were all moſt ſecurely locked every night, he told me "he ſaw no hope of my "eſcaping that way, and the rooms "being very high, I was raiſed ſo far "from the ground, tho' I lay only on "the firſt floor, that he had no ladder "that would reach above half-way to "my window. This induced him to "aſſociate a young carpenter in the "execution of his ſcheme, whom he "found as ſenſible of the charms of "gold as himſelf. They agreed to "join two of their longeſt ladders to-"gether, and thro' favor of the night "place them at my window, from "whence I was to deſcend into the garden.

" garden. The ſame means were to
" be uſed to convey me and themſelves
" over the garden wall, the key of the
" garden being delivered every night
" to Mrs. Herner. Horſes were to be
" ready in waiting, and the young car-
" penter was to be my conductor till
" I arrived at a town where I could
" procure an eaſier way of travelling."

The gardener had in charge, after having conveyed the ladder over the wall, to carry them into the carpenter's ſhop, there to diſunite them, to avoid ſuſpicion, if a ſearch was made, and then returning over the part of the wall, which ſome private excurſions had taught him to climb, he could go into his own bed-chamber without any impediment, as the windows of it opened into the garden, and it was on the ground floor.

This ſcheme, he aſſured me, nothing could fruſtrate but a noiſe being made in the execution of it, which muſt alarm the family.

I thought they ſhewed more care of themſelves than of me; to deſcend from ſo great a height, down a pieced ladder, in a dark night, appeared very terrible

in

in my eyes; and riding on horſeback, a thing I had never attempted, and that too in darkneſs, was not leſs dreadful; but my deſire of liberty was ſo ſtrong, that it overcame my fears, and I punctually obſerved all their directions. The appointed hour found me watching at my window; my guide was punctual; and with trembling ſteps I left a place I deteſted. But my joy was greatly clouded with fear, till, after riding the whole night, at break of day I arrived at a town, where I was informed I might get more ſuitable means of conveyance. The night had favoured my project no other way than by wrapping all nature in darkneſs, and all the inhabitants of our caſtle in ſleep; for the rains beat, and the winds blew; and when I got to the inn I was entirely wet thro' my clothes, my body periſhing with cold, and my heart chilled with fear. My guide had lent me a great coat; but the rain had penetrated that long before we arrived at our journey's end; and it became only an additional fatigue to me, by the great weight it acquired from the rain it had imbibed.

In this condition I would have proceeded on my journey, tho' I was almoſt dead, had not the landlady inſiſted on my going to bed, to receive ſome refreſhment from the two things I wanted, warmth and reſt. I was as little able to contend with her advice, as to purſue my own intention; and thro' weakneſs, more than inclination, obeyed. Before I retired to my room, I would have diſmiſſed the young carpenter; but he poſitively refuſed to leave the place till he had ſeen how I did after my reſt. This humane attention ſurprized me, in one to whom I was a ſtranger, as I had not met with the like from people who had more reaſon to regard me; and I could not but feel myſelf obliged to him for this action, tho' I was afraid he might open his heart with the liquor the inn afforded, and betray the whole affair. I did not fear it ſhould be by that means fruſtrated, but I could not like to be the ſubject of diſcourſe among ſuch a ſet of people.

Theſe thoughts, however, could not diſturb the reſt I ſo much wanted; and after a ſleep of ſome hours I awaked greatly

greatly refreſhed, and determined to proſecute my journey directly. While the chariot was getting ready, breakfaſt was brought me; and with it came my guide to enquire after my health. I thanked him for his good-natured concern, and expreſſed a fear that I had inconveniently detained him from his buſineſs; but he aſſured me that was of no conſequence, adding, "I durſt not, for my life, my "Lady, have left you, till I could give "a *betterer* account to Mr. South; alack, "I warrant he will be main glad to hear "you ſet out from the houſe ſo pure "*hoddy* and *ſprack*; he will have fretted "*hugeouſly* at the night's being ſo bad; "for he was ſo *timberſome* about your "being cold that he made me take his "warmeſt great coat for to put about "you."

Surprized at this addreſs, "I en-"quired what he meant by Mr. South; "I apprehended he knew nothing of "my flight?"

"Ah, Lard, do you think naw," continued the carpenter, "our ſilly "heads could have fancied this fine "plot our own ſelves? No, no, maſter

" gardener knowing Mr. Parſon to be
" your ſweet heart, went and told him
" what you had ſaid toun, and *as how*
" you had ordered that he ſhould not be
" telled of it. Mr. Parſon bidun not
" ſay nothing of having letun into his
" *conferdence*, and having ſent for me,
" and tried as whether I was willing to
" act my part, what do he do but write
" us the plot down, come to my houſe
" and ſee that I had faſtened the lad-
" ders tightly together, that they might
" not throw you a fall; lent me his own
" horſe, becauſe it is as quiet and as
" ſure-footed as one of us chriſtians, and
" then gave me this letter for you.
" My mind gives me, that this will tell
" you all; but I does love to tell news,
" ſo I was bent on telling you all my-
" ſelf."

I opened the letter with a mixture of curioſity and uneaſineſs. It contained but few lines, which were to acquaint me, that, " to prove he deſerved a
" better opinion than I entertained of
" him, when I imagined he would want
" a reward for any ſervice he could ren-
" der me, he had done every thing in

" his

" his power to favour my eſcape, and " would have guarded me in it, had " not my charge of ſecreſy to the " agent I had choſen, as well as my " letter to him, plainly ſhewn that his " preſence and aſſiſtance would be " highly diſagreeable to me. That he " wiſhed he could have contrived to " have ſet me at liberty with more eaſe " to myſelf, but hoped ſucceſs would " amply recompence me for every dif- " ficulty." He ended by the warmeſt wiſhes of happineſs, adding, " that he " would not aſk for leave to be a ſpec- " tator of it, by begging permiſſion " to wait on me in London, fear- " ing that I was ſo averſe to him, that " he could not enjoy that pleaſure, " without its being painful to me; " and he would rather ſuffer the moſt " ſenſible affliction all his life, than " give me an hour's diſquiet; nor was " he worthy to know the occaſion of my " being confined in that old manſion; " and indeed he ſhould be afraid to learn " it, was not his deſpair already arrived " to the utmoſt exceſs."

I ſhould have thought myſelf inexcuſably ungrateful, had I not written a few lines to return my thanks for his generous aſſiſtance; to which I added an aſſurance, that I ſhould be always glad to ſee him whenever his affairs would permit his coming to London; but thro' inadvertency, forgot to give him a direction which might enable him to find me. With this letter I diſpatched my guide, and got into the chariot.

Tho' my ſituation was eaſier than before, yet my mind was far from enjoying peace; every ſtep that brought me nearer London, increaſed my anxiety; I trembled to enquire what I wanted to know; and the meer poſſibility of finding the Marchioneſs's account true, for I often flattered myſelf that it could ſcarcely be called a probability, made me wretched. The only ſource from which I hoped to receive any conſolation was returning to my kind aunt and her peaceful cottage; her wiſe inſtructions, and tender indulgence, I hoped, might, in time, heal my mind, and reſtore me to ſomething like tranquility; for real peace, I believed, would never more

more enter my heart, ſhould this fatal change prove real. If indifference were to incline Lord Dorcheſter to avoid me, yet juſtice, I thought, muſt lead him to inform me in what part of the kingdom my aunt inhabited, a circumſtance he had hitherto kept from my knowledge. Theſe were the reflections of my moſt melancholy hours, which grew more frequent as I approached the place where I had ſo ardently longed to be. My apprehenſions increaſed ſo faſt, that fair hope could ſcarcely find time to ſmile on my black imaginations.

Between this anxiety of mind, and the fatigue of my journey, I was not half animated when I got into town; but as I could not forego my impatient deſire to ſee Lord Dorcheſter while a ſpark of life remained, I ordered to be driven to his houſe, and made the coachman let me out before the ſervant (in leſs haſte than I was) came to the door, and I was ready to enter, as ſoon as it was opened.

I enquired for Lord Dorcheſter with an eager wildneſs, which I ſaw ſurprized them; one anſwered, "he was

" not at home," while another went into the parlour, and, I could hear, pronounced my name. My Lord's voice ſoon informed me that it was to nim he ſpoke; for he, riſing ſuddenly from his ſeat, as I could plainly diſtinguiſh, cried out, " Good God! is it " poſſible! where is ſhe?" but with a lower voice, added; " why ſhould I " aſk where ſhe is? I can never ſee her " more. Keep her from me; and bid " her avoid the man whom ſhe has ſo " cruelly injured, and fear the effects " of his reſentment."

As ſoon as he ſpoke, I exclaimed, with the eagerneſs of diſtraction, " I hear, I " hear his voice! why do you refuſe " to let me ſee him?" and endeavoured to force my way into the room where he was; but the ſervants ſtopped me, and held me faſt. This was not long neceſſary; for his words more effectually deprived me of the power of motion, and for ſome time afforded me relief, by reducing me to almoſt a total inſenſibility.

When I recovered my ſcattered thoughts, I deſired to have a chair called;

called; the ſervants unwillingly obeyed me, being moved with the condition I was in; they would have perſuaded me to wait a farther recovery; and when they found all they could ſay was unavailing, each intreated me to permit him to ſee me ſafe home; but I equally rejected them all; charging them not to offend, on my account, ſo good a maſter, who, it was plain, would be diſpleaſed with any regard ſhewn to one whom he was determined to abandon. "They inſiſted, that they were "ſure he could not be angry at the re-"ſpect and concern which they muſt "be brutes not to feel for me, whatſo-"ever he might think proper to do "himſelf." But I would not ſuffer any of them to attend me, tho', I confeſs, I received ſome ſatisfaction from ſeeing they retained a regard for me, independent of their maſter's. Gratitude will give us pleaſure, whatever heart pays us that valuable tribute.

CHAP. XXXVII.

I Directed my chair to Lady Paleſtine's, from whom I hoped to learn the whole of the affair between Lady Trente and Lord Dorcheſter, which, from his behaviour, I more than ever believed; but pride would not ſuffer me to aſk any queſtions of his ſervants, tho' in ſuch particulars they are generally well qualified to give information.

At Lady Paleſtine's, I was told ſhe was not at home. I knew ſhe never went abroad at that hour; and being well acquainted with the faſhionable paradox of a lady's being abroad when ſhe is at home, I replied, that I was ſure ſhe was denied, and therefore deſired the ſervant would return and tell her my name. He complied; but brought me back word, that "my name could be no "recommendation to me while my "conduct was ſo indiſcreet."

Rejected a ſecond time, I had not courage to go to any other of my acquaintance, eſpecially as her Ladyſhip was

was the only one with whom I was on an intimate footing; but ordered to be carried to my own houſe, where I hoped to be ſcreen'd from ſuch indignities, and perhaps to get ſome light into this undeſerved ill treatment; for ſuch, I thought, I had a right to call theſe affronts, ſince indifference could not excuſe brutality; nor did I ſuppoſe that my forced abſence could be attributed to my diſhonour. I was inſenſible to the ſuſpicious air it bore; and thought it ſhould have excited pity, not reſentment, in the hearts of thoſe that loved me. I imagined they might be apprehenſive for my ſafety, and pity my fate, but not blame my conduct. Since I became better acquainted with the world, I have been ſenſible that they could not be called unjuſt in the ill opinion they had conceived of me, tho' they proved in an error; when people can judge only by appearances, a miſtake may often be unfortunate without being blameable.

But as at that time, my ignorance prevented my looking on the treatment I received in this light, I was not free from

from reſentment; eſpecially againſt Lady Paleſtine; ſhe had hurt my pride; my Lord had wounded me in my affections; and grief did not leave me ſpirit enough to be angry with him. It was not in the power of any other perſon to afflict me, for *where the greater malady is fix'd, the leſſer is ſcarce felt.* My mind was ſo little capable of any increaſe of uneaſineſs, that it received no addition from finding myſelf excluded, even from my own houſe. The chairmen knocked a conſiderable time at the door, till they were convinced nobody was at home, and aſked me where I choſe to be carried.

This queſtion indeed puzzled me, tho' it could not add to my diſtreſs. I was afraid of attempting to get admittance into any other place, leſt it ſhould be refuſed me, and being little able to think, was long ſat down there, before I could recollect a houſe where I might hope to be received. At laſt I thought of a millener whom I had uſed, and directed them there.

This woman very readily accommodated me with a room, and would have favoured me with her company, had I not

not entreated her to leave me to myſelf; for in ſuch a ſtate of mind the ſight of any perſon was irkſome; it muſt have laid me under ſome reſtraint; for my pride would not ſuffer me to declare that I could be ſo much affected by one who felt nothing for me but indifference; and I was afraid of mentioning Lady Paleſtine's behaviour, ſince her ſcorn might prove an example to the millener; for the little love to ape the great. It was not till the next day that I became able to reſolve or execute any thing. I then determined to write to Lord Dorcheſter; juſtifying this courſe from all imputation of meanneſs, by perſuading myſelf, that to ſhew I was blameleſs was a duty I owed to my reputation. Inconſtancy appeared to me the more criminal, from my having no idea of it. I ſuppoſed it a crime almoſt unparelleled; and knew not that cuſtom was thought ſo great an alleviation of the offence, that it was treated by the world as one of the ſmalleſt frailties to which human nature is ſubject. Your Ladyſhip will, therefore, not wonder if ſome reſentment was mixed with grief. But

I found

I found it eaſier to humble my pride than to mortify my affection.

Had I perceived that appearances were againſt me, I ſhould have thought myſelf obliged to make all the ſubmiſſions which could have been required of me, if I had been really in the wrong, for who can be ſecured in ſuch caſes from miſtaking the truth? But without this excuſe for my condeſcenſion, I wrote to my Lord a ſhort account of my impriſonment, adding, that, "I hoped he "would not partake of the Marchioneſs's averſion to me; and he might "be aſſured that I ſhould not return "even an unfriendly wiſh for the injuries I had received from her; for "whoever was his wife I muſt look on "with reſpect; and, if ſhe pleaſed, with "affection; and, indeed, if ſhe made "him happy, muſt feel that gratitude "towards her which a perſon deſerves "who confers upon us the greateſt bleſſings in life; for in that rank I "ſhould always eſteem his happineſs, "however his heart was eſtranged from "me." I then begged, "if he no longer wiſhed to ſee me, he would in-

"ſtruct

" ſtruct me where to find my former ſo-
" litude, and not detain me in a place
" which was become much more lonely
" to me than my cottage."

I forbore, as much as I was able, any ſtrong expreſſions of my grief. If his affection was gone, I did not wiſh to move his pity; and my concern was too tender to ſuffer me to make him any reproaches.

As ſoon as I had written my letter I ſent it by one of the chairmen who had brought me to the milliner's. This man, either moved with compaſſion for one he ſaw ſo deeply afflicted, at an age when grief might reaſonably have been thought far off, or actuated by the leſs laudable motive of hoping to find advantage from attending on a perſon whoſe affairs appeared ſo confuſed and complicated that a menial aſſiſtant might be requiſite, came early in the morning to aſk if I had any commands. Whatever was his motive, the effect was convenient; I wanted a meſſenger, and gladly employed him. His ſagacity convinced him that my letter was of importance to me, and, without my ſaying

ing any thing to that purpoſe, aſſured me he would return with the utmoſt expedition.

I believe the chairman kept his word; but to impatient expectation, time ſeems to move with leaden pace. The hour-glaſs empties ſlowly to thoſe who watch every ſand that falls thro' it. This was the caſe with me; the fleeteſt of the creation, had he been my meſſenger, would have appeared ſlow to my impatience. From the inſtant the chairman left, I expected his return, and would not believe my watch, it marked the progreſs of time ſo tediouſly, in compariſon of my ſwift imagination. After what I thought a long abſence, the man came back; I had ſcarce courage to aſk the ſucceſs of my letter, and was damped by ſeeing none in his hand; but calling all my fortitude to my aid, I ſtuttered out ſomething like an enquiry; to which he replied, Lord Dorcheſter was at home, and the ſervant carried in my letter, but returned immediately with it in his hand, ſaying, his Lord refuſed to receive it, and commanded him, "never to bring any more

" meſſages or letters from me, unleſs " he wanted to incur his diſpleaſure, " and entirely deſtroy all hopes of his " recovery of health or eaſe." With this anſwer the chairman was returning, when the ſervant overtook him, deſired the letter, and that he would acquaint him where I was to be found; bidding him " preſent his duty to me, and aſ- " ſure me that he would make farther " trials to bring me an anſwer; and if " he could not ſucceed, I ſhould receive " my own letter ſafe, with an account " how he had proceeded."

Nothing could be more ſhocking to me than to find my Lord would not even read my juſtification. Indifference alone could make him void of all curioſity about me; therefore I had little hope from his ſervant's good-natur'd intention; I knew if the ſight of his hand had not diſpelled any pique I had conceived againſt him, the ſtrongeſt arguments from another muſt have been unavailing; I ſhould have diſcovered more eloquence in the leaſt ſignificant letter of the alphabet written by him, than in all the words another tongue could have uttered.

uttered. Had I entertained the leaſt hope of ſucceeding by his ſervant's interceſſion, my pride was too much humbled to have felt any mortification at being reduced to make uſe of ſuch an interceſſor; but I confeſs I bluſhed to think how low I was fallen. I now ſtrongly experienced this infallible truth,

She muſt be humble who would pleaſe,
And ſhe muſt ſuffer who would love.

And yet I continued blind to my own paſſion; I ſuſpected myſelf of no tenderer affection than friendſhip, of which I had ſo high an idea that I readily reconciled every pang I endured to my exalted notion of it. If I compared the ſentiments of my heart with what was generally called friendſhip in the world, it only ſerved to make me deſpiſe what others profeſſed, not to ſuſpect my own. A common effect of a compariſon between ourſelves and others; any difference that appears to our own opinion, generally turns to our advantage, and gives us opportunity of beſtowing ſome ſelf applauſe upon our own perfections.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

I HAD been for ſome hours devoted to deſpair, when I beheld Lord Dorcheſter before me. I was ſo buried in thought, that I had not heard the door open, but the ſight of him put all my reverie to flight. He eagerly embraced me; and thanked Heaven he once more had me in his arms. Sudden joy overcame me, and deprived me of the power of ſpeech. During my ſilence, he "begged pardon for his "inſolence in refuſing to ſee me, but "that convinced I had voluntarily fled "from him, he thought it mean as "well as imprudent, to truſt himſelf "with the ſight of one from whom "he was endeavouring to wean his af-"fections; a painful trial which had "coſt him many pangs, and yet proved "totally unſucceſsful. The ſame mo-"tive," he ſaid, "induced him to re-"fuſe my letter; which, he confeſſed, "he repented the next minute, and "ſhould have called back my meſſen-

"ger

" ger had he not been reſtrained by " the fear of expoſing himſelf to his " ſervants, and being deſpiſed for his " meanneſs. This conſideration pre- " vented his aſking any more queſtions " concerning me the day before; but " he could no longer maintain the ſame " command over himſelf, and on ſome " other pretence, calling the ſervant " who had brought him my letter, " he enquired what meſſenger I had " employed."

This gave the good-natured footman an opportunity of deſcribing the condition into which I was thrown by his refuſing to ſee me, and all that paſſed on the occaſion. Seeing his Lord moved by the account he gave him, he ventured to expreſs his wonder at his Lordſhip's having rejected my letter, for, " he was ſure I could not be " in the wrong, ſince it was plain to " perceive that I did not expect ſuch " treatment as I had received the day " before; and had none of that con- " fuſion in my countenance ſo impoſſi- " ble to be hid by one who fears the " reproaches of a perſon ſhe has in- " jured.

" jured." Lord Dorcheſter, without ſeeming offended at the liberty he took, replied, that " if he had ſuppoſed Miſs " Lenox could have juſtified herſelf, he " would, at leaſt, have read her let- " ter; and, indeed, could not but ac- " cuſe himſelf of great inſolence in " having refuſed to ſee her, when ſhe " had favoured him with a viſit, or " to receive what ſhe had done him the " honour to write; but that anger had " got the better of the reſpect due to " her."

The ſervant not perceiving that pride might be his Lord's ſtrongeſt motive for retaining ſome appearances of regard for one whom he had taught every perſon belonging to him to reſpect, was encouraged by the manner in which he ſpoke of me, and told him " the chairman had left my let- " ter, therefore the means of repair- " ing what he thought an offence was " ſtill in his power." Obſerving that he looked rather diſconcerted than angry; he brought it, and laying it on the table before him, went out of the room, while my Lord continued

tinued in an anxious uncertainty what courſe to take. He owned, that " had " his ſervant ſtaid, he could not have " prevailed on himſelf immediately to " have opened the letter, ſo ſtrong " was pride and reſentment; but when " he found himſelf alone, every other " conſideration vaniſhed before his hope, " weak as it was, of ſeeing me juſtified " by my own defence." But, continued he, " when I had read your let- " ter, the affliction expreſſed in it, un- " tinctured either with reſentment for " the inconſtancy of which you ſuſ- " pected me, or the meanneſs of one " who cannot feel an injury; and the " cruel treatment you had received on " my account, as I gathered from the " circumſtances you related, gave me " the tendereſt concern, at the ſame " time that it relieved me from a ſtate " of miſery, to inſpire me with the " moſt lively joy. I could not reſtrain " my impatience, but inſtantly repaired " to your houſe, with ſuch haſte and " eagerneſs in my ſteps and counte- " nance, as attracted the attention of

" every

" every one that met me. I per-
" ceived it plainly, but could not com-
" mand either, nor on ſuch an occa-
" ſion beſtow a thought on the opi-
" nion of the multitude. But when
" I hoped to receive the reward of my
" haſte by the ſight of you, I learnt
" that you was not there, nor could
" your ſervants give me any further
" information, than that a neighbour
" told them a chair had ſtopped a con-
" ſiderable time at your door the day
" before, and finding no one at home,
" at laſt went away. I reproved them
" for their negligence in leaving the
" houſe empty, with more warmth and
" bitterneſs than I believe any of my
" dependants ever ſaw me uſe; and
" now had no chance of finding you
" but in the poſſibility of my people's
" having learnt where you were. In
" order to make this enquiry, I re-
" turned home with as much ſpeed as
" I had left it, and had the ſatisfaction
" of hearing where you lodged. Add
" to this, my joy in finding you, my
" deareſt Ophelia, the delight of know-
" ing you think me worthy of pardon.

" Relate

" Relate to me every circumſtance of " what has befallen you. Compleat " my felicity by giving me hopes you " ſtill retain an affection for me, or " if you do not, forbear to tell it me: " deceive me into happineſs, and hy- " pocriſy will for once be a virtue." Alas! I replied, " I never had leſs " occaſion to act the hypocrite, if this " is all you require. Though I have " thought your treatment of me cruel, " I could not reſent it. My heart " was too much your's to be angry; " it could only grieve. But ſurely, " it was a melancholy recompence for " all the pain I had ſuffered by my " abſence from you."

Lord Dorcheſter uſed all his power to ſoothe me; and in juſtification of what he had done, informed me, that Lady Trente wrote him a letter the day after my being carried off, to inform him, that " ſhe had overheard " Miſs Lenox concerting with a young " gentleman, the night before, the " means of running away with him; " and conſidering all the precau- " tions neceſſary towards concealing

" him

" him from his Lordſhip's reſentment,
" and her from his ſearch. That ſhe
" did not hear of the day that was
" agreed upon, therefore thought ſhe
" could not too ſoon give this informa-
" tion, as there ſeldom paſſed much
" time between the forming ſuch
" ſchemes and the execution of them;
" and knowing none of my friends,
" but his Lordſhip, ſhe believed her-
" ſelf obliged in mere charity to ac-
" quaint him with it, as it might give
" him the power of preventing the
" young Lady's ruin."

This ingenious epiſtle found Lord Dorcheſter in the utmoſt anxiety; and the agreement it bore to my diſappearing, perſuaded him of the truth of it. A propheteſs who could fulfil her own predictions, would be very injudicious if the fact did not correſpond with her words. He went directly to her houſe to enquire more particularly into the affair, which ſhe confirmed to him by many corroborating circumſtances of her own invention; and expreſſed herſelf " vaſtly " concerned, that ſhe did not appre-

" hend how ſoon it was to be executed,
" ſince it might poſſibly have been pre-
" vented, if ſhe had acquainted him
" with it at the inſtant ſhe overheard
" us." Lord Dorcheſter wanted to diſ-
cover the gentleman; but ſhe would give no particular deſcription, telling him, " ſhe could not ſatisfy a curioſity " which might endanger a life ſhe ſo " highly valued; as ſhe feared he in-" tended to call the perſon to account." Whenever he preſſed for this information, he could obtain nothing but expreſſions of her attachment to him (of which, though not a vain man, he was not ignorant before) and invectives againſt my ill conduct; telling him " it ſhould make him indifferent to " my fate, for no more could be re-" quired of a guardian than a parent " would perform, who on ſuch provoca-" tion muſt abandon their beſt-beloved " child, and leave her to receive the pu-" niſhment ſhe ſo juſtly deſerved."

Lady Trente procured many interviews with Lord Dorcheſter, by pretended informations that might aſſiſt him in finding me out, the only means ſhe could

could diſcover of bringing him to her houſe; and therefore her working brain was continually employed in inventing them; and every time ſhe ſaw him ſhe omitted no endeavours to attract him, but mixed ſo many bitter accuſations againſt me, with the language her love dictated, that ſhe only increaſed his diſlike to her. He thought the love could not be delicate or generous, that took a pleaſure in giving pain to the object of it, whatever benefit ſhe might hope would thereby accrue to herſelf.

Having ſufficiently informed each other of all that had paſſed during our ſeparation, we ſpent the reſt of the evening in rejoicing at its being, at laſt, ended; but my Lord declared he ſhould never more think me ſafe out of his ſight, nor knew how he ſhould venture to leave me for an inſtant. There appeared an increaſe of tenderneſs in him, which ſilenced all my repinings at what I had ſuffered. Some diſaſters give a reliſh to good fortune, and little reverſes quicken affection.

CHAP. XXXIX.

I DID not return to my own houſe till the next morning; the hurry of my ſpirits had a good deal diſordered me; and as all places are agreeable to the happy, I choſe to remain that day at my lodgings; one great reaſon, I believe, might be an unwillingneſs to loſe any of my Lord's company, by the interruption we ſhould have received from removing my habitation.

My Lord Dorcheſter grew extremely uneaſy when he perceived that my ill ſtate of health was more laſting than my anxiety. We had both flattered ourſelves that happineſs would have cured me; but I believe my conſtitution had ſuffered as much from the unwholeſome ſituation of the Marchioneſs's caſtle, as from vexation, and therefore eaſe of mind was not ſufficient to recover me. He made me conſult a phyſician, who declared Tunbridge waters the moſt probable remedy; but as it was

was yet too early in the year to drink them, he gave me ſome medicines for preſent relief, with but indifferent ſucceſs.

My Lord determined to carry me to Tunbridge, as ſoon as the ſeaſon would permit, and engaged Lady Paleſtine to be of the party, which I then looked upon as an obliging attention; without any one to countenance and direct me, I muſt have been extremely at a loſs, in a place ſo new to me; but I have ſince perceived, his motive was to prevent my becoming intimate with any perſon, who, not being ſo well inſtructed, might have fruſtrated his views.

In the interim, my Lord's principal care was finding me out a variety of amuſements. I was carried to every place where there was any novelty that might divert me; but none made ſo great an impreſſion on me, as a collection of curioſities, and Bedlam, both of which I was ſhewn. I propoſed great pleaſure from the firſt, imagining I ſhould there ſee every thing that was uncommonly beautiful; and was greatly

diſappointed to find, that on the contrary, the collector ſeemed to have been actuated by a pique at nature. For if ſhe happened to ſwerve from her general laws, to contradict all order, beauty and uſe; the miſhapen, unformed maſs became to him more valuable than her faireſt productions. He had ſpent his life in ſearch of things, from which moſt people would have run away, and had cheriſhed what would have frighted others. I found he was the general parent of monſters, the grand nurſe of abortions, and equally the careful receiver of thoſe who were born dead, or died of old age, declaring war with the earth, by defrauding it of its due tribute, the bodies of the deceaſed. The latter, indeed, I was informed had not been performed by his own art, he having robbed Egypt of half its Ptolomies, and yet without a moral view in ſhewing how poor a load is the body of a king. One might ſay with Anthony,

Lie there thou ſhadow of an emperor;
The ground thou covereſt on thy mother earth,
Is all thy empire now.——

I was

I was carried next to Bedlam, where I was ſurprized to find ſo few perſons confined in a place, which I was told had been appropriated to the reception of ſuch as were deprived of their reaſon, for I myſelf had ſeen a ſufficient number to have filled it, whom I ſhould have judged well qualified.

It was ſtrange to me, that no perſon ſhould be thought to deſerve confinement, but he whoſe hurtful actions proceeded from miſtaken notions. While he, who is prompted by evil intentions, who acts in open defiance of religion, virtue, and reaſon, and endeavours to form a happineſs for himſelf in deſtroying that of ſociety, ſhall be imitated by a few, approved by many, and tolerated by all. He ſhall be ſuffered to enjoy liberty, who from a falſe pride reduces himſelf and family to beggary and ſhame; he, who proſtitutes his principles, and tramples honeſty under foot, in order to gain honours, ſhall be received into ſociety, while the poor wretch who innocently fancies himſelf a king, ſhall be ſhut in a dark room. Denied the light of the ſun,

which graciouſly *ſhines on the juſt and the unjuſt.*

I received great conſolation from ſeeing ſo much happineſs among a ſet, who, above all others, ſeemed to claim our pity; and was glad to find, that the lunaticks in Bedlam, as well as thoſe that live more at large, could ſay that *there is a pleaſure in being mad, which none but madmen know.* And I am not ſure the former have not the larger ſhare of it. He who madly believes felicity to conſiſt in things which, when attained, would give him more pain than ſatisfaction, he who aims at impoſſibilities, and ſearches for what cannot be diſcovered, has juſt reaſon enough to feel diſappointment, but not to conquer the turn of mind which led him into the vain purſuit which occaſioned it.

On the contrary, in Bedlam, the ambitious man is a king, and with fancied majeſty, ſtruts as proudly in his wretched rags, as if cloathed in coronation robes, and his head is as eaſy as if graced with a diadem. The miſer, in his dirty cell, believes himſelf

ſelf poſſeſſed of mines of gold, and rejoices in his ſtore. The gay man enjoys imaginary pleaſure, and fancies variety, while his life paſſes in a dull ſameneſs, day after day. The politician here beholds the ſucceſs of every ſcheme; he new moulds the ſtate, wages bloody wars, effects the greateſt revolutions, and becomes the ruler of the world, without ſtirring out of his little cell. Here the author's imagination reconciles the two things he before found moſt irreconcileable, wit and riches, and enraptured, enjoys a conſciouſneſs of ſuperior genius. The vain woman, in ſpite of age or ſmall pox, perceives an admirer in every one that beholds her; and the finical beau fancies finery in his filth. Where every thing is imaginary, the pride and vanity of the undertaker aſſures him of ſucceſs; nothing but reaſon will convince an obſtinate man that his genius can be conquered, and his well-laid ſcheme baffled.

I was not long permitted to enjoy the conſolation I received from finding that miſery was not always the

portion of the mad; for we were ſoon carried to another part of the hoſpital, ſet aſide for thoſe who were afflicted with imaginary wretchedneſs. This, indeed, was a dreadful ſight; for tho' the cauſes were fantaſtick, the ſufferings were real. There was ſomething too ſhocking in this ſcene to tempt me to make a ſtay of many minutes in it. We left it as ſoon as we could; but yet I thought the leſſon it gave might not be uſeleſs to a mind capaple of reflection. Should it not teach mankind to endeavour to bring their paſſions under the directions of reaſon? to fix their inconſtant minds, and expel every fantaſtick whim, leſt they ſhould gain ſtrength from time and encouragement, till they arrive at the dreadful exceſs of which Bedlam affords ſo many examples? If people once ſuffer themſelves to deviate from reaſon's path, who can pretend to fix any certain bounds for their miſguided ſteps; and when the conſiſtency of action which ſhe ſhould conſtitute, gives place to every whim of a capricious mind, it is not wonderful that they ſhould

ſhould wander on till they arrive at diſtraction. The pleaſures, honours, and misfortunes of thoſe who are denominated rational beings, are generally imaginary; they frequently rejoice at what is no benefit, and grieve for what is no evil; they eagerly purſue trifles which are not worth a thought, and neglect matters of the higheſt importance: in ſhort, they will labour years to obtain pleaſures which laſt but a day, and, for a moment's gratification, will give up the happineſs which ſhall continue through all eternity.

I cannot help thinking your Ladyſhip lulled into a ſweet ſlumber, by my moralizing on this ſcene; but indeed you muſt excuſe me, for it made ſo deep an impreſſion on my mind, that I can never recollect it without falling back into the ſame train of reflections which I then made upon it, and for which a longer experience of the world has only ſerved to give me a greater ſcope. In conſideration of this indulgence, I will promiſe, if poſſible, to avoid all ſuch offence for the future, and the better to effect

effect it, will carry your Ladyſhip to a new place, paſſing over in ſilence the remainder of the time I ſpent in London; for as it afforded little beſide matter for reflection on cuſtoms to which I was a ſtranger, I may be apt again to turn moralizer. I muſt depend on the actions of others for making my narration more agreeable to you, than a long ſeries of my own thoughts, which are nothing but a compoſition of witty obſervations, that would make any good-natured perſon weep the poverty of the imagination that gave riſe to them; lively remarks, that would prove better ſoporifics than all the opium in Turkey; diſſertations moral, religious, and entertaining; from which, after much yawning, you may learn, that it is right to do right, and wrong to do wrong; that friendſhip is better than enmity, and that it is wiſer to pleaſe than to offend. Theſe great truths I ſhall leave to be taught by perſons who love ſporting on an old ſentiment in thread-bare words; avoiding, as much as I can, the produce of my own brain, in hopes of affording you

you more entertainment by collecting exoticks, than from any plants that ariſe from ſo bad a ſoil as my imagination, which is not very fertile of any thing but weeds.

I muſt not, however, omit one affair which was tranſacted before we left London. The Marchioneſs of Trente was ſo enraged at Mrs. Herner's having left me a poſſibility of eſcaping, by which her ſchemes were fruſtrated, and ſhe expoſed, that ſhe refuſed to ſee her at her return to London, where Mrs. Herner went, as ſoon as ſhe found I was irrecoverably loſt. A more lamentable effect of the Marchioneſs's diſpleaſure than the withdrawing the light of her countenance, was her refuſing to maintain her any longer; in which denial ſhe abuſed her in the moſt opprobious terms that rage and inſolence could ſuggeſt. In this diſtreſs, Mrs. Herner applied to many of her friends, but found that few people's compaſſion extended farther than words and condolances, as for more effectual conſolation every one ſhifted her off to another, as more able to aſſiſt her; like Gay's hare,

hare, received nothing but advice to apply to others; *the ſheep's at hand, and wool is warm.* I ſuppoſe ſhe thought I might harbour ſome reſentment againſt her, in conſideration of the part ſhe had been employed to act towards me; at leaſt, ſaw no reaſon to expect I ſhould do for her what thoſe who called themſelves her friends refuſed; ſo that I only heard by chance that ſhe and her neice had quarrelled, but the occaſion of it was unknown. Lord Dorcheſter had adviſed me to conceal the Marchioneſs's behaviour towards me, and Mrs. Herner had not declared it, fearing to exaſperate her ſtill more.

Though I was as little diſpoſed to eſteem Mrs. Herner's diſpoſition, as to be grateful for the office ſhe had undertaken, yet I could not be inſenſible to her diſtreſs. "A brave man ſtruggling "with the ſtorms of fate," is the nobleſt work of God, and deſerves our admiration; but a mean man is ſtill his workmanſhip, and, when afflicted, demands our pity. I told my Lord how much her misfortune affected me, and the more as I was, though not blameably, the

the occaſion of them. I found his heart was not leſs penetrable than mine; he compaſſionated her, and ſaid, "he could "not bear that any one ſhould be made "wretched by an event which reſtored "his happineſs. He anſwered me, that "I might be eaſy on her account, for "he would take care ſhe ſhould have "the means of being ſo; but thought "it right that, if poſſible, they ſhould "be procured from Lady Trente, who, "at leaſt, deſerved that puniſhment."

Lord Dorcheſter accordingly went to the Marchioneſs, and told her, that "ſhe muſt know he was well acquaint-"ed with her treatment of me, and that "ſhe might expect to have it made "publick, and to become the topick "of general diſcourſe, if ſhe would not "agree to ſettle an independency on "Mrs. Herner. Not that he was at "all obliged to that Lady's intentions, "who had been a vigilant gaoler, but "becauſe he pitied the woman." Lady Trente was ſhocked at ſeeing my Lord; but this propoſal ſoon turned the bluſh of ſhame into the higher red of anger. He found her invincible

cible ſpirit ſcarcely to be ſubdued by the pride of reputation. She would indeed, after a ſhort reſiſtance, have conſented to receive her aunt; but my Lord had undertaken the poor woman's cauſe, and thought he ſhould but half relieve her diſtreſs if he expoſed her to her niece's ill uſage. He therefore inſiſted on a ſettlement of 200l. per annum for her, finding no hopes of ſuch an allowance voluntarily, as he thought her relation to the Marchioneſs, and her paſt merits, deſerved from her. At laſt he ſucceeded; got the ſettlement drawn up, and delivered it into the hands of the overjoyed Mrs. Herner.

CHAP.

CHAP. XL.

LADY Paleſtine delayed our going to Tunbridge, for more than a fortnight after Lord Dorcheſter wiſhed me there. He was deſirous of my drinking the waters as ſoon as the weather would permit; but her Ladyſhip did not apprehend ſhe ſhould receive ſufficient pleaſure from watching my recovery, to reconcile her to the place while it continued empty. She did not give this as her reaſon for deferring her journey, but put it upon buſineſs, which, in a woman who had no buſineſs but pleaſure, told it as plainly, though more civilly, than if ſhe had ſaid it in expreſs terms. By this delay, the place was pretty full when we got thither. We arrived late at night; but the love of company determined Lady Paleſtine to appear the next morning, and ſhe inſiſted on my doing the ſame. I had been accuſtomed to evening crowds; but to be introduced into one ſo early in the day, was quite new to

to me, and ſo little agreeable to me at a time when my health made me rather languid in a morning, that I wondered it ſhould ever be a practice among a ſociety of invalids.

The muſic which played while the company remained upon the walks pleaſed me; but I have laughed at myſelf ſince, for the reaſons I aſſigned for it. I imagined it was intended as a part of that courſe which was to reſtore the ſick to health; and medicinally deſigned to promote chearfulneſs, to remove the gloomineſs acquired in the night, enliven the languor of a ſick perſon's morning, to divert their thoughts from their infirmities, and give a turn to their ſpirits. Not contented with this reaſon alone, as ſome of the muſic ſeemed too loud for the trembling frame of an invalid, I ſuſpected it was alſo intended to drown the complaints of the ſick, as drums and trumpets are uſed in battle, to prevent the groans of all the wounded from being heard by the reſt, who might be intimidated by them. Imagination often makes us attribute to deſign

deſign what is really the effect of chance,

And learned commentators view,
In Homer, more than Homer knew.

But I am ſtill of opinion, that though this may not be a reaſon for the muſic's playing, it is a good conſequence ariſing from it; for I obſerved, that if it ceaſed for a moment, I heard a hundred voices, too weak indeed to contend with the ſhrill violin, or the hoarſe violincello, uttering promiſcuouſly the words jaundice, palſy, gout, rheumatiſm, with the names of almoſt every other diſeaſe incident to human nature; with ſo minute a detail of the ſymptoms of each, as increaſed the evil in the ſufferer's imagination, and lowered the ſpirits of the hearer; and all in ſuch a confuſion of tongues, that it was impoſſible to appropriate to each their reſpective complaints, but ſerved to convince me, that all diſtempers were there aſſembled. This filled my mind with a kind of horror; and I was almoſt

moſt ready to believe I made one in Holbein's dance of death.

I was for ſome time amuſed with the variety of characters this place afforded, and with the vanity and envy ſo apparent in many, which I make no doubt often delays the benefit that would otherwiſe be received from the waters. A pretty woman, afflicted with the jaundice, whoſe ſpirits have been ſufficiently depreſſed with the cloud of yellow ſpread over her charms, has been ſeen to grow viſibly of a deeper dye by the perſecution of a rival beauty, who, to complete the triumph of health and bloom, would always ſit next her. It was common to ſee a young lady with bright eyes, and reſplendent complexion, place herſelf cloſe by a pale and languid ſpectre, and with pleaſure conſidering the contraſt; or a giggling girl, crowding a dejected invalid, who might have ſat for the image of patience on a monument.

The variety of behaviour in this various company, was not leſs entertaining. I was often diverted with obſerving a meeting between a delicate

town

town lady, and a robuſt Northern laſs; the contempt in each of their countenances, ſufficiently proved the ſelf-ſatisfaction of both. The eaſy aſſurance of a perſon much accuſtomed to company, and the timorous ſlineſs of a country girl, who never before was five miles diſtant from the family manſion, makes no bad ſcene; the one advancing with intended affability, while the other, with innocent fear, retires from the forward thing, whom ſhe ſuſpects of ſome bad deſign.

When I had ſo often obſerved theſe movements of the mind, that they grew old to me, they ceaſed to entertain, and I became very much tired of the rooms, except on ball-nights. I loved dancing; and Lord Dorcheſter, or Lord Larborough (who followed us down to Tunbridge) were my partners. I found more than ever the inconvenience of being the ſubject of obſervation; I could neither ſit nor walk in peace. Every motion was conſtrained, by perceiving myſelf continually ſtared at. In a morning, indeed, I was leſs obſerved; ſick people have not then

then ſpirits enough to be impertinent: my Lord ſaid I owed it to the paleneſs of my complexion, for ſickneſs had robbed me of my natural colour; though the heat of the room in an evening, would in a degree reſtore it. Lady Paleſtine uſed to be out of patience with the uneaſineſs ſhe ſaw me under at being looked at; and would tell me ſhe never envied me ſo much; I have been ready to reply, that "perhaps ſhe thought "a very exact examination could diſ-"cover only beauties in her, whereas "I was fearful that ſuch ſtrict obſerva-"tion muſt rather enable them to per-"ceive defects in me, which, in a tran-"ſient view, might be overlooked."

I wiſhed myſelf leſs at leiſure to remark the actions of others, the impertinent effect of idleneſs; and growing extremely tired of ſitting by a card table without having the leaſt knowledge of the game there played at (which however ſo fixed Lord Dorcheſter's and Lady Paleſtine's thoughts on their cards, that I had no converſation with them) I was tempted to try my fortune at a game

a game at chance, then much in faſhion. As no ſkill was required I thought I might ſucceed as well as others; fortune has been ſaid to favour fools, and at play I was an abſolute ideot, therefore had ſome reaſon to hope he would prove propitious.

I went home, the firſt night, winner of two or three guineas, and was very well entertained. Play, by keeping up an eager attention, amuſed me much, and ſoon awakened in me the ſpirit of a gameſter. I regularly attended the table every night, but conſtantly with bad ſucceſs. This did not diſcourage me; but on the contrary, convinced my luck was changed, I continued till I had not a ſhilling left; fully expecting that every ſtake would bring me back a part of what I had loſt. I was now in a diſagreeable ſituation; I reproached myſelf for my folly, and not being able to ſupply the expences of going abroad, was obliged to ſpend my evenings at home. This was not very eaſy; for Lady Paleſtine loved no place that was not crowded,

and

and my Lord was engaged in a party, which he knew not how to leave; I was obliged therefore, to practice a conſtant reſiſtance to the preſſing inſtances they continually made me to accompany them. It was with regret I did what ſeemed ſo very obſtinate and diſobliging as to perſiſt in ſaying I did not chuſe to go, when they ſo earneſtly intreated it; but I was too much aſhamed of my folly to own my reaſon; beſides, that it would have been making my Lord pay for it inſtead of myſelf. To be ſo long deprived of his preſence, was very painful to me; if I had gone to the rooms, there were times when he was not fixed to a card table, and I then uſed to enjoy his converſation; but now I did not ſee him for three long hours together. He too regretted the ſame; and, at laſt, began to account for my obſtinacy from his own imagination.

One day he was extremely melancholy, though he ſeemed as fond of me as ever, if not more tender; but it was accompanied by ſuch an air of dejection, that I forgot

I forgot the emptineſs of my purſe, and thought of nothing but him.

Having a dread of his jealous temper, I conſidered whether this change could be attributed to it. I recalled to mind every circumſtance of my behaviour; whereby I diſſipated all fears of that ſort. I had been ſo very cautious of giving him offence, that I had avoided the acquaintance of all men, and had not even given a civil anſwer to thoſe who ſpoke to me, or thanked them for ſuch civilities as people have an opportunity of paying at a publick place. To do this had been a great force on my diſpoſition, which is naturally free and gay; but I had ſuffered too much not to conquer it.

Unable to gueſs at the reaſon of the depreſſion of my Lord's ſpirits, I begged him to tell it me, and with ſome reluctance he ſaid, "It is cruel, "my dear Ophelia, to perſecute you "any more; I am ſenſible, if I am un-"happy it is not with your intention; "your behaviour ſhews me, that you

" are unwilling to make me ſo; though
" it afflicts, yet it obliges me; and by
" raiſing my eſteem, increaſes my af-
" fection, while it proves the abate-
" ment of your's. Do not imagine I
" mean to reproach you; you are not
" unjuſt, though I am unhappy; our
" inclinations are not in our power;
" if your's were, I am perſuaded I
" ſhould retain the ſame portion I once
" enjoyed. You look ſurprized; but par-
" don me, my deareſt angel, if I impute
" your reſolution of not going abroad,
" to a deſire of conquering ſome im-
" preſſions made on your heart, which
" in publick you fear would be in-
" creaſed. I can aſſign no other rea-
" ſon for your reſiſting our importu-
" nities, and thus turning us looſe in a
" place of gaiety and diſſipation; nor
" for the confuſion and diſturbance
" which is viſible in you, when we
" endeavoured to get you with us, and
" the thoughtfulneſs in which I often
" perceive you. I admire the efforts
" you uſe to conquer this new-born
" inclination; it is worthy the good-

" neſs

" neſs of your heart, which would " make you grieve to render any one " ſo unhappy as you know I ſhall be " made by the loſs of your affections. " I have nothing to complain of but " my own defects, which prevent my " keeping a heart that ſo generouſly " endeavours to remain mine. I al- " moſt pity you for poſſeſſing vir- " tues, which increaſe a love your " humanity would wiſh to diminiſh; " you are far above the low pride of " deſiring to preſerve an affection you " cannot return. My kind, my good " Ophelia, tell me, with your natural " ſincerity, if I may hope, that by " thus avoiding my powerful rival, I " begin to recover the heart I was " in danger of loſing." All this he uttered with ſo much melancholy and tenderneſs, that I could have ſhed tears for his imaginary misfortune. My aſtoniſhment at this unaccountable whim was beyond expreſſion. I cried out, " What will not a jealous fancy " ſuggeſt! How fertile is its inven- " tion! Oh! my Lord, how ingenious

" are you to torment yourſelf! Who " would imagine, that all your ſuppo- " ſitions have no other foundation than " my ſtaying a few days at home! Con- " ſider how ſuſceptible you are of fan- " cies that afflict you; had I been eager " to go abroad, I ſhould have given riſe " to ſome of theſe kind of ſuſpicions; " by chuſing to ſtay at home, I have " done the ſame; can nothing but a " total indifference to every thing, " give you the eaſe of mind I wiſh " you? I have much of it in my " heart; but youth and vivacity will " not ſuffer ſuch coldneſs of manner. " I then aſſured him, that ſo far from " having found any one whom I was " diſpoſed to like too well, I had not " even ſeen a man that was agreeable " to me." But all I could ſay would not convince him. He replied, " this " was the anſwer of my humanity, " not of my truth; that I thought " concealment juſtified by the eaſe " it might give him; and, in ſhort, " he would not believe that his fears " were groundleſs, if I would not

" tell

" tell him the reaſons of my leaving " off going abroad, when he imagi- " ned it was grown more agreeable " by my having got into a party at a " game of which I ſeemed very fond." I then told him that the truth was, " I " had been ſo fooliſh as to loſe too " much money to like it any longer." " That," replied his Lordſhip, " is " no reaſon why you ſhould not go " abroad as you did before you played." Thus he perplexed me, by not readily accepting my reaſons; till at laſt, I was reduced to tell him, " that I thought " it would be more prudent to take the " honour of the delicate, wiſe, and " generous ſentiments, upon which he " had ſuppoſed me to act, than to own " frankly, that I was ſo very great a " fool as to loſe every ſhilling I had " at cards; and, by that means, had " been obliged to keep houſe for want " of money to defray the neceſſary ex- " pences of going abroad."

I looked ſufficiently ſilly, I believe, when I made this confeſſion; but when I had thus mortified myſelf, it was hard

that my Lord would ſcarcely credit it. To give a particular deſcription of my folly, was a ſufficient puniſhment for it; but I found this neceſſary in order to convince his incredulity; ſo with ſome bluſhes I told him, "that my "firſt ill luck made me deſperate, and "I loſt all my money in trying to re-"cover part of it."

Lord Dorcheſter laughed ſo heartily that he put me almoſt out of humour, and quite out of countenance; but he ſoon acknowledged this to be ſo natural and ſo common, that it was extremely credible; and declared himſelf overjoyed to find that my money, and not my affections, had been won. He would have repaired my ill fortune, by giving me much more than I choſe to accept. "He begged I would not controul "my inclinations, for he could furniſh "me with a conſiderable ſum yearly, "without any inconvenience to himſelf, "and could truſt to my prudence for "not exceeding it."

I could not forbear returning him thanks for an indulgence in reality

ſo

ſo blameable, by telling him, that "he was willing to build his depen-"dance on a very weak foundation, as "my paſt folly too plainly ſhewed," I aſſured him, "I was ſufficiently diſ-"guſted with play, and would never "again begin any thing to which my "prudence found it difficult to put a "ſtop."

My Lord ſeemed ſo happy in having learnt the cauſe of my retirement, that I could not but think I was peculiarly fortunate in having the power of giving ſo much pleaſure by the diſcovery of my follies. But this ſuſpicious turn in his temper appeared to me very ſtrange; I thought it an unaccountable narrowneſs of mind in a man ſo generous in other reſpects.

I wondered he ſhould ſuppoſe friendſhip ſhould be ſo ſoon conceived or ended, ſince either appeared to me a work of time. One might ſee merit in an early acquaintance, or in ſome unguarded moment, diſcover faults, which for a long time had been concealed; but the effect could not be ſo ſpeedy;

natural indifference, or habitual fondneſs require time to conquer them. However as this covetouſneſs of my affection proved the value he ſet upon it, I was not inclined to complain of the conſequences; but thought myſelf made for the deſtruction of his virtues, ſince only in his behaviour to me had he ever ſwerved from the moſt extenſive generoſity and tendereſt humanity.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLI.

DURING my ſtay at Tunbridge, I ſaw many bad conſequences attend gaming; but none are worth communicating, except one, which was ſo ludicrous, that as it ſoon became publick, it grew a general entertainment. A country gentleman, a few years before, had married a young lady, with whom he made an agreement, before marriage, that ſhe ſhould never go to London; to which, as liking the man and his fortune, ſhe readily conſented. After a pretty long ſtay in the country, ſhe began to grow a little tired of her ſolitude, and could not forbear uſing ſome perſuaſions to prevail on her huſband to be more complaiſant after marriage than he was before. A ſtrange endeavour certainly; but he being a good natured man, was ſorry to refuſe her earneſt requeſt; though as their eſtate was ſmall, and they had a pretty large family, he could not reconcile it to his conſcience. However,

as her deſire grew very ſtrong, and her importunities frequent, he at laſt told her, that " an expedition to London " was too expenſive to agree with " their finances, but if ſhe could ſave " up an hundred pounds, as ſhe had " the ſole care of the money, he would " go with her to Tunbridge, and ſtay " there as long as it laſted."

Thus encouraged in her œconomy, ſhe abridged their own table, ſtarved the ſervants, and was indefatigable in her endeavours to ſcrape up this happy ſum.

This, in a year's time, ſhe accompliſhed, and, with great joy, acquainted her huſband with it. He had ſuffered a little by the change which this ſparingneſs had produced in the entertainment of himſelf and his friends; but that had never mortified him ſo much, as the knowledge that the ſum was compleated. He was fond of the country, loved the ſport it afforded, and had beſides great part of his eſtate in his hands, for the good management of which his preſence was abſolutely neceſſary. However, he would not diſappoint

appoint his wife, or break his word; ſo the day was fixed, and they went thither accordingly. They placed themſelves in the firſt lodgings they could find; but as they were very bad, it was agreed they ſhould change them for better the next week.

Now our lady was in high bliſs; and that all her time might be filled up, was abroad from morning till night. The huſband was not fond of any of the diverſions going forward there; and found the wearineſs natural to people at firſt coming to a place where they have no acquaintance, and where the manner of life is quite different from what they have been accuſtomed to, or liked; but he did not deſpond, as he hoped to get into a little more ſociety and hoſpitality when they had a better apartment.

Accordingly, at the end of the week, he deſired his lady to give him the bill in which they had brought their money, that he might get it changed, and then they would go and take good lodgings, and ſettle themſelves in a comfortable and handſome manner.

The

The meek wife was a little confounded, and deferred her compliance, ſaying, "it was time enough; their "lodgings would ſerve very well ano-"ther week, and then they ſhould have "better choice, as in ſo fluctuating a "place many people would be gone "by that time," with many other pretences to delay it. But the huſband, ſhewing her reaſons were not ſufficient, perſiſted in his requeſt.

This increaſed her confuſion to the greateſt degree; at laſt, with downcaſt looks, conſcious bluſhes, and fluttering voice, ſhe cries, "my dear, I have "changed the bill." "Oh! very well," anſwered the huſband, "it will ſave "me the trouble of doing it; but "give me a little money that I may "provide us with ſuch things as we "want." The poor lady grew ſtill more diſtreſſed, and was reduced to whiſper, "I have no money." "I beg "your pardon," anſwered he; "I un-"derſtood you had changed the bill. "Come, give it me then, and you ſhall "have ſome preſently. I aſſure you, "Molly, there is no living at this place without

" without money." " You are right," anſwered the penitent wife, " I have " changed the bill." " Well, well," replied the huſband, " I am very " ſtupid to be ſure, this thick air " has affected my ſenſes, and I can " underſtand nothing: firſt, I fancied " you ſaid you had changed the bill; " and then, that you had no money. " I do nothing but blunder. Come, " my dear, let's go and ſeek for lodg- " ings; our couſins of Penn-Hall came " laſt night; my uncle Crump writes " me word, he ſhall be here to-mor- " row; and my aunt Jones is expected " every minute. We muſt invite theſe " friends to dinner. I would not have " them think we are grown fine folks, " becauſe we are in a fine place; we " muſt not forget our relations. I love " to live well every where with my " family." " My love," ſays the abaſhed lady, again, " indeed you do " not blunder; I beg your pardon, " but," and inſtead of finiſhing her ſen- tence, a few tears trickled down her cheeks. " What is the matter with " you, Molly?" quoth the huſband, " why

" why, you are a ridddle, I think.
" Come, ſpeak plain, and never cry.
" Why you know I am never angry.
" You are my good wife, and I love
" you; ſay what you pleaſe, for I can-
" not bear to ſee you vexed."

" You are too good, my dear," replies the wife, ſobbing grievouſly; " but " it muſt come out, ſo I may as well " tell you at firſt, my love, that I " have loſt."——— Here the tears flowed again. " Oh, you have loſt " your purſe, have you?" anſwered the huſband; " why I am ſorry for you; " it is hard you ſhould loſe any part " of what you had ſaved with ſo much " care, and I wiſh I could afford to " make it up to you. But we will " have it cried. If an honeſt perſon " has found it, he will reſtore it un-" diminiſhed; but to be ſure, there are " more rogues than honeſt men here; " ſo the chance is againſt us; how-" ever, if we do not recover it, you " are ſo good a manager, that we ſhall " do very well ſome time on the reſt, " we muſt live a little more ſparingly, " that is all."

Alas!

"Alas! Alas!" cried ſhe, in an agony, "there is no reſt to live upon. "We have nothing of which to be "ſparing." "What," ſays he, "had "you all the money in your purſe? "That was unlucky indeed, and I am "afraid will make it more difficult to "be recovered; for there are people "whoſe honeſty would have reſiſted "twenty pounds, who will not be proof "againſt an hundred."

"It was not loſt ſo neither, my dear "huſband," replied the lady, "I will "confeſs the whole truth, if my tears "will but let me. You muſt know "then, the firſt night I went into the "rooms, I ſaw a great many people "at a pretty play; it ſeemed the eaſieſt "game in the world. Some very ci-"vil perſons made room for me, and "I could not ſee why I ſhould not play "as others; ſo I ſat down, and began "by winning; but before the end of "the night I loſt a good deal, and "was obliged to get the man belong-"ing to the table to change my bill. "The next morning I endeavoured to "win it back again, and did in part.

"At

" At night I thought I might win the " whole; but inſtead of that, I loſt " more. I was aſhamed to let you " know it; but intended as ſoon as " I could get back all I had diſburſed, " to play no longer, and to ſettle all " things with you." Here her ſorrow " grew very clamorous, and with much difficulty ſhe ſobbed out, " in trying to " win it, I loſt it all to ten guineas." At this melancholy concluſion, the weeping dame was quite inconſolable; but the huſband, not ſorry to have a good excuſe to return home, where his affairs required his preſence, " begged " her to make herſelf eaſy. That " he came only to divert her, and as " ſhe had had her diverſion, he was " perfectly well pleaſed, and as much " ſo that it was done in a ſhort as a " long time. That he would pay for " their lodgings, and their journey " back; he had juſt heard a coach " cried that was going to their part " of the world; and he would ſe- " cure it directly, for them to return " in, intreating her to be under no con- " cern." Thus he got her ſafe home,

to

to his great ſatisfaction; nor was the lady ſo mortified as one migh imagine; being well out of a ſcrape ſhe feared would have greatly offended her huſband. She thought herſelf much obliged to him for an indulgence which he found very eaſy, as the event of their journey was as agreeable to him as it could be, in procuring him a ſpeedy return.

Though in one folly I was kept in countenance, if companions in our weakneſſes can have that effect; yet my ignorance and want of thought had conſequences of ſuch importance, that if I could have pleaded precedents for my errors it would have offered me no conſolation.

The diverſions of the place brought me into ſcrapes of which I had no notion before: that which moſt alarmed me, aroſe from a ball.

At the beginning of the evening, I was aſked to dance by a gentleman with whom I had no acquaintance. Having been a good deal indiſpoſed all day, I had determined not to dance, and ſaw nothing in this ſtranger, that ſhould

ſhould conquer my reſolution, with which I acquainted him, and he choſe another partner. Toward the end of the night, being pretty well recovered, a lively tune inſpired me with an inclination for dancing, and Lord Dorcheſter being by me, offered to be my partner, which was an additional inducement, and accordingly we began; but I had not gone down many couples, before I was ſtopped by the gentleman I refuſed, who addreſſed me with ſaying, "I had not uſed him like a gen-
"tleman, in dancing after I had told
"him I did not chuſe it."

His countenance wore ſuch viſible marks of anger, that he ſtartled me very much; but I anſwered very innocently, "that what I ſaid was the
"real truth; when he aſked me, I did
"not chuſe to dance; but that I after-
"wards altered my mind."

To this he replied, that "the change
"he ſuppoſed was occaſioned by being
"aſked by a different perſon; had Lord
"Dorcheſter been in his place, the re-
"fuſal would ſcarcely have been given."

I was

I was inſenſible to any affront being deſigned in this. I thought what he ſaid extremely probable, though it was not then fact, and with great ſimplicity aſſured him, that "he was miſtaken; "for that when he aſked me I would "not have danced with any one, though "I allowed, to have had Lord Dor-"cheſter for a partner, might have been "a ſtronger temptation, as my intimacy "with him muſt make him more agree-"able to me."

The angry man grew more ireful, and replied, "beauty could not ex-"cuſe inſolence;" adding, that "he "did not at all doubt but I was inti-"mately acquainted with his Lordſhip, "who, in return for the intimacy, "ſhould teach me how to treat gen-"tlemen of faſhion." He continued ſome time in this ſtrain, repeating the word intimacy with a ſneer, and ſo ſtrong an emphaſis, that I thought it had offended him, but did not imagine he meant more by it than I had done.

My Lord did not hear it with the ſame indifference. He came up to him, and told him, "it was not acting the part

"of

" of a gentleman to inſult a Lady, " who, ignorant of the cuſtoms of " balls, having never been at one be- " fore ſhe came to Tunbridge, could " not properly be ſaid to offend againſt " a ceremony ſhe knew not. He, in a " whiſper, offered to defend my in- " tention, and juſtify his right to me " as a partner, when and where he " pleaſed; being as ready to do it as to " correct his impertinence and inſolent " inſinuations." " And," continued he, " a man of courage would chuſe " to attack one, rather than to affront " a young lady, from whom none but " yourſelf could reſent any behaviour, " tho' he might feel it moſt ſenſibly." Lady Paleſtine, who was within hearing, cried out to me, " what have you " done! You have occaſioned a quar- " rel which may become fatal to the " life you value above all others." Her words filled me with terror and confuſion. I could not comprehend her meaning fully; but was ſo extremely affected, that Lord Dorcheſter begged her to be ſilent, and deſired I would permit him to lead me home.

He

He could not have made a requeſt with which I ſhould more gladly have complied. I feared I knew not what for him, and conſequently for myſelf; if he was with me, I thought us both ſafe; I wiſhed to carry him from a place which, from what I could learn, I had made dangerous; and hoped to receive from him an explanation of what Lady Paleſtine had ſaid to me. She followed us immediately; and made me underſtand the nature of the affront I had given, and the danger that reſulted from it. The agonizing fears which now agitated my mind, rendered me incapable of receiving conſolation from my Lord's aſſurances that the quarrel would paſs over without further conſequences. I could not be perſuaded that they were not ſolely deſigned to eaſe my apprehenſions, and therefore dared not venture to believe what the next day might prove too fatally untrue. I blamed him for his anger, telling him, that "if I had "done a thing that was wrong, I "deſerved a little incivility in re-"turn, and that he ſhould not have re-

"ſented

"ſented expreſſions which were not "too ſevere a puniſhment for an of-"fence againſt cuſtom, though the er-"ror aroſe from ignorance, not deſign: "ſince people in the polite world pro-"feſs being guided by faſhion rather "than by reaſon, I could not ſtand "excuſed by what is not here a rule "of action, nor be juſtifiied by truth, "where, of all places, it is leaſt allow-"able in a polite circle." I was ſhocked to find that decorum and politeneſs required that I ſhould have palliated my refuſal with his, and not have owned a preference ſo very reaſonable and ſo little affronting, that the gentleman might have flattered himſelf it proceeded only from being acquainted with Lord Dorcheſter, and entirely unacquainted with him; a circumſtance which muſt greatly leſſen the pleaſure of dancing with him, however agreeable he might be to thoſe by whom he was better known. But as ſuch were the laws of cuſtom, I thought my error ſhould have been acknowledged, and the gentleman's anger unreſented.

Any

Any danger that threatened Lord Dorcheſter, appeared to me in its utmoſt terrors; but nothing could affect me ſo much as the apprehenſion of being the occaſion of an action, which if not fatal to his life, muſt be ſo to his virtues, and conſequently to his peace. Duelling, to one unprejudiced, muſt appear ſo criminal, ſo contrary to every branch of morality and religion, that I could not bear my Lord ſhould have the moſt diſtant intention of committing it; that alone I thought a ſufficient crime to ſully the purity of his mind for ever. His not perpetrating his deſign could not make me eaſy; that he ſhould have ever harboured the leaſt thought of it, was an inſurmountable affliction to me, who valued his integrity as much as his life, and was as tender of the one as of the other.

Lady Paleſtine laughed at my eſteeming ſo criminal, an action which ſhe "called ſpirited and honourable, and "almoſt requiſite to the perfection of "a fine gentleman's character, in which "courage was the moſt neceſſary ingredient

" gredient." Not conſidering that a defiance of the laws of God deſerves a far worſe name, and can never, to a well judging mind, wear the diſguiſe of any virtue. Her ſentiments raiſed an abhorrence in me, which my regard for her could not ſuppreſs; but I received ſome ſatisfaction from finding my Lord did not differ much from my opinion, but owned, that " the pro-
" pereſt object for true courage was the
" reſiſtance of a cuſtom which contra-
" dicted the divine will; and that
" duels proceeded from a degree of
" cowardice which is always moſt moved
" by preſent danger, and therefore had
" ſtronger fears of the cenſure of man-
" kind, which is a puniſhment imme-
" diately inflicted, than of the wrath
" of God, whoſe effects may for ſome
" years be ſuſpended. He confeſſed,
" that when he had ever been in dan-
" ger of fighting a duel, he was always
" ſenſible his motive was a want of
" real valour, which he eſteemed, but
" knew not how to acquire."

CHAP.

CHAP. XLII.

THOUGH the night put an end to a converſation in which we were not likely to agree perfectly, as our real ſentiments differed, yet it could not afford me any reſt. The opinion my Lord had expreſſed of duelling, in a great degree abated my fear of any ſuch event; but yet as he confeſſed his own weakneſs, at the ſame time he acknowledged the crime, I could not think the ſafety of his perſon certain, and was ſenſible that his mind was not leſs contaminated, but rather more ſo, from the ſenſe of the ill which he had thought of committing. I trembled for the man who could regard his fellow-creatures more than their great Creator; and ſuffer the moſt pernicious cuſtom to baniſh religion, and even plain morality, from his breaſt.

Immerſed in theſe reflections, the morning found me. My heart was too much oppreſſed to ſuffer me to think

of reſt, I had not even entertained a thought of going to bed; but after having ſent away my maid, had yielded myſelf up to my meditations.

As ſoon as my Lord was up, which I learnt from a meſſage he ſent to enquire after my health, I went to him in his dreſſing room, rather to confine than to converſe with him; for I could not think of letting him go out of the houſe, unleſs I could have accompanied him, which was by no means proper, for the agitation of my mind, and want of reſt, had made ſuch alterations in my countenance, that I was not fit to be ſeen. My Lord had an air of thoughtfulneſs, which increaſed my fears. Indeed my converſation was not fit to remove it; but even Lady Paleſtine's vivacity was ineffectual. He was ſerious, but not diſturbed; his thoughts took a graver turn than common, but were not at all confuſed. This gave me ſome hope that the alteration which alarmed me, might ariſe only from the ſenſe of the raſhneſs he had been guilty of; I could not believe that a man while under the actual

actual intention of a crime, could poſſeſs any compoſure of mind. Confuſion and terror I imagined to be the neceſſary conſequence of criminal deſigns; and therefore received ſome conſolation at perceiving none of thoſe ſymptoms of guilt in him. Though I could not obtain a promiſe from him, that he would not fight with the man who had made me ſo wretched, yet he ſaid every thing that he hoped might make me eaſy; but the want of that aſſurance weighed heavier in the ſcale of fear.

A viſit from a gentleman with whom I knew him to be intimately acquainted, obliged me to withdraw; for my eyes were ſo ſwelled I was aſhamed of being ſeen; but I intreated Lady Paleſtine to keep ſight of my Lord; an office to which her own fears inclined her. When I retired to my chamber, I began, as was my cuſtom when afflicted with vexation, to lament my having been taken from my retirement; but my thoughts ſoon took another turn, on reflecting how ſeverely my Lord might ſuffer by having brought me from thence.

The puniſhment that threatened him extenuated his offence, and I only grieved that he was not born there with me; that he had not likewiſe been placed in a ſolitude where death was under God's immediate direction, and none could paſs into another world till the Almighty had diſmiſſed them from this, and opened for them the gates of eternity.

Above an hour had paſſed in theſe reflections, when I was raiſed by the entrance of Lady Paleſtine, who had ſuch conſternation in her countenance, as ſtruck terror to my ſoul. My fear turned me to a ſtatue; I could neither ſpeak nor move; but ſhe rendered all enquiries unneceſſary, by telling me, that ſoon after I withdrew, Lord Dorcheſter deſired her "to ſtep out of the room, "for he had a little buſineſs to tranſact "with his viſitor." As he had long employed this gentleman in ſome affairs, ſhe was not ſurprized at the requeſt, but complied with it. She long waited in expectation of being told they would be glad of her company, ſuppoſing the buſineſs that had required her

her abſence could not laſt long; but finding her expectation not anſwered, ſhe attended more carefully, and could not hear any one in the room; upon which ſhe entered, and found it indeed empty.

She thought it ſo impoſſible that Lord Dorcheſter ſhould have evaded her care, that ſhe was going to ſeek for him in the houſe, when ſhe obſerved, on a ſhelf againſt the door, a ſealed packet, which ſhe had not perceived before ſhe withdrew, and, as ſhe imagined, put there as the ſafeſt place, there being no bureau or drawer in the room. Pen, ink, and paper, on the table whereon we had breakfaſted, ſhewed her they had been uſed. She found the packet was directed, by Lord Dorcheſter, for me.

Drawing very melancholy concluſions from theſe circumſtances, ſhe was greatly ſhocked. She brought me the packet, which I opened as ſoon as I was able, though I rather expected to learn more certain grounds for my fears, than any thing that could abate them. And, indeed, my grief received a very great

addition from the contents, which were a will, as it ſaid, made for greater ſecurity in confirmation of one he had left in London, whereby he bequeathed me his whole fortune.

This proof both of the danger that threatened his life, and of the ſtrength of his affection, had ſo melancholy an effect upon me, that I fell into fits; from which Lady Paleſtine found it ſo difficult to recover me, that ſhe left the fruitleſs trial to my ſervants, and gave her care where ſhe hoped it might be of more real ſervice.

She made all poſſible enquiry, in order to find which way Lord Dorcheſter had gone; but not being able to get any information, ſhe knew not how to contrive means of having him purſued, which was her intention. From this perplexity, ſhe was, at length, relieved by a gentleman, who, by a deſire of avoiding company and taking a quiet walk, had choſen the leaſt frequented places, and, in the moſt retired ſpot, found Lord Dorcheſter and his antagoniſt fighting. It was not without difficulty he parted them. My Lord had received no hurt,

hurt, but his adverſary was wounded in two or three places, but not mortally; my Lord's aim being to diſarm him, without giving any conſiderable wound.

The gentleman, whoſe preſence had been ſo fortunate, waited on Lord Dorcheſter home, who, on his arrival, found me in a condition that revenged me for the fright he had given me, by occaſioning equal fears in him. The obſtinacy of my diſorder made him ſend for a phyſician, whoſe aſſiſtance he hoped might relieve me. Whether the art of this ſon of Æſculapius, or my natural ſtrength might more properly claim the honour of my cure, I will not pretend to ſay, but one or the other wrought my recovery.

The firſt object I beheld was Lord Dorcheſter, who, ſtanding at my bedſide, was watching the ſymptoms of amendment. Joy and perception now ſeemed but one. To ſee him ſafe filled me with tranſports, which words could not have expreſſed, at a time when I had more at command; but at that happy inſtant I was ſpeechleſs, not

being ſufficiently recovered. However, ſilence did not conceal my joy; I embraced my Lord with a tenderneſs that ſurprized him; he has told me ſince, that, till then, he knew not half the impreſſion he had made on my heart; though he had long perceived I loved him with a ſtronger affection than I myſelf imagined.

The grave doctor's countenance expreſſed ſo much ſurprize, that it did not paſs unobſerved by me; but attributing it to his having outlived the lively ſenſe of joy, ſo natural at my time of life, I thought it no reaſon for me to confine the vivacity of ſenſations, as innocent as if they had been chilled by old age, and therefore did not conceal the tranſports of my heart. Since I became better acquainted with the world, I have been inclined to believe that I incurred the old gentleman's private cenſure; but as ſecreſy is full as neceſſary in that profeſſion, as knowledge in phyſic, he did not publiſh a behaviour which I ſuppoſed he thought indecent.

As ſoon as I was quite recovered, the doctor was diſmiſſed, and reſolutions were

were taken for our leaving Tunbridge, whoſe waters had removed the complaints which brought me thither; and I had now no diſorder remaining, but what was the conſequence of my fright, and would be cured by eaſe of mind. I had, therefore, no occaſion to ſtay longer. Lord Dorcheſter did not like to remain where he was continually expoſed to hear his conduct canvaſſed; and your Ladyſhip will imagine it could not be agreeable to me to liſten to an univerſal diſcuſſion of my inadvertency, ſince the conſequences of it made it appear almoſt criminal.

Lord Dorcheſter left the place in two days; but Lady Paleſtine, on pretences to which I was obliged to ſubmit, detained me there above a week after him; but I have ſince learnt that this was concerted between them, to avoid giving room for an increaſe of the reports which began to be ſpread, of a mutual attachment between my Lord and myſelf; which would have received great ſtrength from our leaving Tunbridge together.

CHAP. XLIII.

AFTER Lord Dorcheſter left Tunbridge, the place grew very tireſome to me. I had nothing to do but to obſerve the various follies of the companies and to ſtudy vanity, which I perceived ſuffered alteration rather than diminution by time. The woman, who in her youth, placed her ſupreme joy in the flattery of the other ſex, and in the number of partners ſhe had at her command; when activity is no longer in the legs, and age has ſtiffened the joints and ſunk the ſpirits; in ſhort, when pertneſs has undergone its uſual transformation into dulneſs, and an old age of cards ſucceeds a youth of folly, a plentiful ſupply of gentlemen of her party becomes the great object of her ambition; and the contention between her and her cotemporaries of the ſame taſte will be as great as their envy while they were rival beauties. The appearance of a man of quality juſt arrived, awakes an

an equal impatience in both to add him to their party; while he, wavering between the importunities of each, keeps them in a ſuſpence that increaſes their enmity. At the beginning of a ſeaſon a private gentleman finds himſelf of conſequence; but has the mortification of perceiving that he dwindles in their eſteem on the arrival of a nobleman, who in his turn becomes neglected, if one of higher degree can be had to ſupply his place; for the vanity of theſe ladies is ſo voracious, that notwithſtanding the party is full, they are ſo eager to raiſe the dignity of it, that after dropping the plebeians one by one as they gather patricians, the nobility, at laſt, become obliged to each other for their releaſe; thus a Duke ſets an Earl at liberty, the Earl a Viſcount, the Viſcount a Lord, as the Lord did a Baronet, and he before the untitled gentleman.

Nothing appeared to me more ſtrange than the love of precedency. I have often been diverted to ſee how much pains a lady would take to walk firſt out of a room where lazineſs would have

have inclined her to remain; and laſt into another, where ſhe was ſo little wiſhed, and ſo little pleaſure attracted her, that ſhe could not have come too late. In this particular I gave great offence when I firſt went to Tunbridge, and while I took place of thoſe who had a real title to it, I received only cool contempt for my want of breeding, and they would drop the acquaintance of the *vulgar thing*. But having gone before a young lady whoſe right of place was diſputed, ſhe purſued me with ſuch ſwiftneſs, and aſſerted her prerogative ſo forcibly, that ſhe threw me down a flight of a dozen ſteps, thereby impreſſing my want of good breeding ſtrongly on my mind; and the ſenſe of it being kept awake by my bruiſes, I afterwards became ſo cautious, that nothing but a deſire to eſcape ſome impending danger could have induced me to have taken place even of a milliner. With no ſmall entertainment have I obſerved a young lady, whoſe father had not been long ranked among the nobility, break off in a ſtory ſhe was eagerly

eagerly telling, the ſubject being herſelf, and leave her honour and glory imperfectly celebrated, in order to get out of the door before the daughter of a new made Peer, whom ſhe ſaw going towards it; while her mother, at a few yards diſtance, was prolonging her diſcourſe with all poſſible impertinence, that ſhe might leave the room at the ſame time with the newer Peereſs, and have the pleaſure of aſſerting her prerogative.

But the laſt day of my ſtay at Tunbridge, I was taken off from this employ of the idle, the impertinently critical obſervations of others, which render them almoſt as deſtructive to ſociety as thoſe who are buried in miſchief. Lord Larborough, who, by Lord Dorcheſter's departure, was become my partner in dancing, and my principal companion in converſation, gave me a more affecting and more intereſting ſubject for my thoughts. He had long profeſſed a great friendſhip for me, and for ſome time had added to the appearance of it by the moſt minute attentions, and thoſe flattering diſtinctions which

inſenſibly

inſenſibly gain the eſteem and regard of a young perſon. I converſed with him with all the freedom and confidence of friendſhip; not more pleaſed with him on his own account, than from knowing my Lord's affection for him.

From the time Lord Dorcheſter went away, Lord Larborough never mentioned him without a ſeeming perplexity; and when I would indulge myſelf in giving him the praiſes I thought his due, he would turn the diſcourſe, and drop little hints, which at the time paſſed without my notice, though his unwillingneſs to dwell on the ſubject moſt pleaſing to me, rendered his company leſs agreeable.

The day before we left the place, Lord Larborough appeared very uneaſy. I could not forbear enquiring the reaſon of it, to which he replied, that " the thought of going away diſ-
" treſſed him."

I aſked, " what could attach him
" to that place, ſince he appeared to
" have no intimacy with any perſon
" there, and was not of ſo trifling a
" diſpoſition as to take any great de-
" light

" light in the pitiful amuſements it " afforded, or to compare them with " the more ſolid pleaſure ariſing from " the ſincere friendſhip and converſa- " tion of a man whoſe mind was full " of variety, whoſe wit was inexhau- " ſtible, his judgment ſolid, and his " learning extenſive; of which no one " could be ſo ſenſible as himſelf, ſince " he had an underſtanding capable of " perceiving and taſting his friend's " excellence, and ſaw him, when con- " fident in his affection, remove all " reſtraint and diſguiſe."

Lord Dorcheſter's name would have been an unneceſſary addition. Lord Larborough could not doubt his being the man I meant, and accordingly anſwered, that " he wiſhed diſguiſe was " leſs requiſite to ſupport the good cha- " racter of many people. Had that " never been baniſhed, the converſation " of the man I ſo highly eſteemed " would have been more delightful to " him, and he ſhould not have been " obliged, when he admired the under- " ſtanding, to have grieved that the " heart had ſhared ſo little of the per-

" fection

" fection too laviſhly beſtowed on the " other."

I could not hear aſperſions ſo contrary to my ſentiments without reſentment, and expreſſing myſelf warmly on his venting ſuch injurious inſinuations, he replied, " he was every way un- " fortunate if he had incurred my diſ- " pleaſure by a ſlight expreſſion of the " indignation, nothing but affection " for me had raiſed. Had the part " of Lord Dorcheſter's character he re- " flected on, concerned any other per- " ſon, he ſhould have beheld it with " the ſame indifference he did the views " of his other friends; but ſince his " reſentment had excited my anger, he " ſhould never more touch on the ſub- " ject, which, indeed, he knew not " how he came to do at all; he could " curſe his tongue for giving way to " the ſincerity of his heart; and hint- " ing at ſecrets, which my Lord's con- " fidence in him had bound him by " ſtronger ties to conceal, than his " affections for me could offer for diſ- " covering them, he begged me to for- " get what he had ſaid, and never let

" one

" one thought reſt on his inexcuſable " inadvertency." Fortunately, though I am not naturally very curious, this made me ſo; " I deſired he would tell " me plainly what he meant," but he excuſed himſelf from complying. As I preſſed him ſtill more earneſtly, he more abſolutely denied me; till, at laſt, I gave it up in deſpair. As if his reſiſtance was wearied out at the ſame time with my importunities, but in reality, as he did not deſign to keep the ſecret, he was then reduced to declare that " he was not able to diſobey " my commands; that I was abſolute " miſtreſs of him, and he wiſhed he " could ſay of his fortune likewiſe, " which he would lay at my feet, if " it could in any way alleviate the " ſenſe he feared I ſhould have of the " treachery he was going to relate." By the force of this preparation, I began to tremble before he commenced his narration; but every word increaſed my horror. He began in the following manner. " I muſt previouſly ac- " quaint you, that it is very cuſtomary " for gentlemen to live with women

" as

" as if they were married, without " being ſo; which has this conveni- " ence, that they can leave them when- " ever they are tired, or ſee another " they like better. You have, by " great care, been kept ignorant of " this cuſtom, leſt it might fruſtrate " his Lordſhip's intentions, by raiſing " your ſuſpicions of them; for all his " hopes of ſucceſs, depend on the " ſtrength of your affection, joined " with unſuſpecting innocence. To " ſhew what his deſires are, he waits " impatiently to find ſome moment " when your virtue ſhall be off its " guard; this he may reaſonably ex- " pect, while you are in no apprehen- " ſion of an enemy."

Here I could not ſuppreſs an exclamation ſuggeſted by my hatred in ſuch principles, but cried out, " what a ba- " ſis for ſo vile, ſo treacherous an in- " tention! Can love and innocence " be turned into a means of ruin by " the perſon who ought moſt to pro- " tect them."

" Every thing," he continued, " has " hitherto been ſo well ordered, that

" no

" no one ſuſpects you are not a wo-
" man of real fortune, otherwiſe inno-
" cence could not have preſerved you
" from infamy; for all people would,
" on the knowledge of your being
" thus maintained at his expence, judge
" you guilty of the worſt returns. A
" fate you muſt expect, whenever
" chance ſhall diſcloſe the ſecret, which
" ſooner or later will happen.

It is impoſſible to expreſs what I felt during this narration. All I had ever ſuffered, the fear of every evil, the perſuaſions of his inconſtancy, were trifling pains to the thought of ſuch baſeneſs in a mind I had eſteemed the ſeat of virtue. I could better endure an eternal ſeparation from him, than thus to find him a ſtranger to goodneſs. My ſurprize and my deteſtation at all Lord Larborough had told me, was ſo great, that I could expreſs it only by involuntary ſigns. I was ſtruck dumb with ſo amazing a diſcovery. To this ſucceeded reflections on the probability of it. My love for Lord Dorcheſter ſeized on this only hope with eagerneſs, and I declared that the account

count I had liſtened to, was paſt belief; and he having concluded with offering his houſe and protection, and aſſuring me of the greatneſs of his affection, I added that, " I could eaſier imagine " that the love he profeſſed had the " conſequence I obſerved to be ſo com- " mon in his country, jealouſy, and " a deſire, ariſing from it, of getting " me from him, who, till my laſt " breath, muſt be cheriſhed by me as " my deareſt friend, than give way for " one hour to ſo injurious a ſuſpicion " of him, in whom I had experienced " and obſerved the beſt qualities our " imperfect nature admitted." Lord Larborough was piqued at my reply: he told me, " if I choſe to nouriſh the er- " ror I was in, he had no more to ſay; " but, perhaps, the proſpect he had " drawn, was not ſo ſhocking to me as " he had imagined it would be; if I was " deſirous of ſearching into the truth " of what he had ſaid, he would con- " vince me whenever I pleaſed."

This propoſal ſtartled me. It gave an air of truth to what he had related, which I could have wiſhed not to have

have found in it; but in a doubt of ſuch importance to me, I could not reſt, therefore begged to have it cleared up as ſoon as poſſible. He then informed me, "that there was an eaſy method "of diſcovering the whole the firſt "evening he ſhould ſpend at my houſe "with Lord Dorcheſter, after I got to "London; I had nothing to do, but to "excuſe myſelf ſoon after ſupper, on "pretence of the head-ach, and a de-"ſire of going to bed, but inſtead of "doing ſo, to conceal myſelf where I "might hear all that ſhould paſs between "them." I came into this, ſo anxious was I to know the truth of this dread-ful account, though it appeared to me diſhonourable for me to liſten to what one is not intended to hear, yet ſurely, if ever excuſable, it was ſo in my caſe. If Lord Dorcheſter was ſo very criminal as Lord Larborough repreſented, I could not expect an honeſt confeſſion from him; and a denial of it, tho' ſincere, would not have entirely conquered my ſuſpicions, or conſequently have reſtored either my happineſs or his; which de-pended, in ſome meaſure, in my confi-dence

dence and eaſe of mind. If in diſowning ſuch intentions, he denied the truth, my ſituation was too dangerous to remain ſafely in it. Beſides, if a diſintereſted regard was ſo uncommon in this country, I perceived that though I ſhould keep my innocence, I muſt loſe the reputation of it, which, next to it, ought to be a woman's firſt care. To be obliged both to leave him and conquer my affection, was, indeed, a taſk too hard for my weak reaſon; but I flattered myſelf, that if this ſhould prove true, my friendſhip would be turned into contempt. I loved him for the appearance of goodneſs and truth which he ever wore. If he proved different from what I believed him, the love founded on that belief ought to change; I hoped it would not outlive the object, as I could not reflect on the virtues I thought he poſſeſſed without recollecting they were profaned by being made a cloak to vice and injuſtice. I waited with impatience for the hour in which we ſhould ſet forth on our journey, fearing, yet wiſhing, to learn what truth there was in Lord Larborough's accuſation. I was not without

without hopes of finding it a fiction; but yet when I recollected ever circumſtance of Lord Dorcheſter's behaviour, my apprehenſions were increaſed. If mankind were what Lord Larborough repreſented them, I had, indeed, great reaſon to ſuſpect my Lord's views were ſuch as had been deſcribed to me; but I was unwilling to let my thoughts dwell on ſo cruel a probability; and ſet out from Tunbridge with a mind ſo divided betwixt hope and fear, as is, I believe, more painful than the worſt certainty, for anxiety is a more grievous ſtate, as it is more turbulent than deſpair.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLIV.

AS we approached London, expectation of the event made me full of trouble; and with great reaſon, ſince it was to determine my future happineſs or miſery. Cruel uncertainty! the greateſt misfortune certain and preſent could not exceed the torment of the anxious fears that then oppreſſed me. My fluttering, fond, but honeſt heart, was robbed of peace, and ſcarcely hoped ever again to enjoy its beloved tranquility. I had no occaſion to feign myſelf ſick; alas! I was ſo in reality; my ſtrength, my colour, almoſt my life, had failed me, from the time my ears had received the killing narration. Could I have diſtruſted Providence, or repined at its Almighty, and, however obſcure, its juſt decrees, I ſhould have complained of my hard fate, in thus being toſſed about by more uncertain things than winds and waves, the inclination of a fantaſtick, mercileſs race of mortals.

How

How does diſtreſs heighten devotion, which in proſperity is apt to grow languid; with what ardent zeal did I addreſs the Almighty, and to his beſt will reſign myſelf; prayed for a continuance of the happineſs that fatal day had interrupted, or if that petition was preſumptuous, and I might not dictate to his wiſdom, which watches over all his works, I only begged that I might preſerve untainted the virtue he had given me, improve the portion I was born with, and not live to ſee myſelf ſwerve from his moſt righteous laws, but that his grace would ſtill vouchſafe to protect the creature of his power, the dependant on his mercy.

When I arrived, I found Lord Dorcheſter waiting for me at my houſe. He perceived I was very ill, and ſeemed greatly concerned at it; my illneſs excuſed my converſing, for which, indeed, I was but ill qualified. He tried with his enchanting tenderneſs to ſoothe my pains; but I was now acting the hypocrite, complaining of my head, while my heart was the only ſufferer; and

that was more diſtreſſed than relieved by his care and fondneſs. The ſcene was difficult for me to ſupport, and I was glad when Lord Larborough came in. As ſoon as ſupper was over I left them, but went into a cloſet, the door of which I had purpoſely ſet open. I was no ſooner in appearance gone, than Lord Dorcheſter began to expreſs the great uneaſineſs he was under at ſeeing me ſo ill, as he was afraid it might be the beginning of a fit of ſickneſs. Lord Larborough took this opportunity of bringing on the diſcourſe he aimed at. "Indeed, my friend," ſaid he, "I am "not ſurprized at the greatneſs of your "apprehenſions, to be robbed by death "of the fruit of all your ſchemes, "all your attendance, generoſity and "love, would mortify a man leſs paſ-"ſionately fond than yourſelf."

"If you do not wiſh to be troubled "with a very bad companion all this "evening," replied Lord Dorcheſter, "mention not the word death. The "thought of her ſuffering any pain, "is more than I can ſupport, with-

"out

" out a conſiderable diminution of ſpi-
" rits. But, whatever happens, I can
" never think I have been unrewarded
" for any thing my love has made
" me do, if it has hitherto rendered
" her happy, which I flatter myſelf
" it has done. Her kind and inno-
" cent marks of affection would re-
" compence me for any pain or trouble,
" whereas my care of her has been my
" greateſt joy."

" Well," anſwered Lord Larborough,
" I will no farther affront your gene-
" roſity, though I cannot flatter you ſo
" far as to ſay you have acted through
" a mere love of that virtue. If thoſe
" godlike qualities were to be found
" unmixed among mankind, I ſhould
" ſooner expect to ſee them in you than
" in any one; but, in truth, my friend,
" ſenſe has had as great a ſhare in the
" direction of your actions as ſenti-
" ment; pray which has been moſt
" gratified?"

" As for gratification," ſaid Lord Dorcheſter, " ſentiment has had much
" the beſt time of it. Ophelia is cer-
" tainly above us mortals; ſhe never

" condeſcends like Goddeſſes of old,
" to diveſt herſelf, for one moment, of
" her divinity; and for any hopes of
" amendment I can ſee, I may worſhip
" my deity till the end of my life,
" without finding her once propitious to
" her votary's wiſhes."

" I am afraid," anſwered Lord Larborough, " you underſtand the arts of
" love leſs than thoſe of any other kind,
" or you could not now be as far from
" your hopes, as when you firſt took
" her from her ſolitude."

" I believe," replied Lord Dorcheſter, " I may practice the arts of love
" with leſs ſkill for having ſo much of
" the reality. I have ſo true an eſteem
" and reſpect for her, that I reverence
" her virtues and her underſtanding,
" while I adore her perſon; thoſe awe-
" ful ſenſations are great retarders of a
" lover's progreſs; but yet I flatter
" myſelf with a different opinion from
" yours. I cannot help thinking I
" have made a conſiderable ſtep to-
" wards ſucceſs. I have gained her
" heart, my Lord, and I take that to
" be the ſure road to her perſon. It

" is

" is impoſſible a woman ſhould always
" reſiſt both her love and her lover;
" they muſt prevail in time, how
" great ſoever her prudence may be,
" or I ſhall never believe woman was
" made out of the rib of a man, and
" yet differ ſo much from our natures:
" I already begin to ſuſpect that Miſs
" Lenox ſprung from another creation;
" and was made out of ſome more icy
" compoſition than the reſt of woman-
" kind. But yet, truſt me, however
" cold ſhe may naturally be, her ten-
" derneſs for me, my paſſionate love
" for her, with that innocence which
" takes from her all ſuſpicion, conſe-
" quently all fear of having the object
" of her affections watching for a com-
" plying moment, muſt, in time, yield
" me the reward for my long ſer-
" vices and diſappointments. I am
" certainly a coward; for I have not
" yet ventured to attempt any li-
" berties which a veſtal might not
" permit. When my ſpirits are at the
" higheſt, and I think my paſſion no
" longer to be hid, there is a purity
" around her, ſuch aweful purity in

" every look and word, that I bow " to virtue, and worſhip it in her fair " form. There is more innocence in " her careſſes, than can be found in the " coldneſs of any other woman. In- " ſtead of encouraging my hopes, they " damp them while they charm me; " and ſhew the beſt affections in ſuch " beauty, that I cannot forbear calling " myſelf a villain, for not being more " like her." " And pray," ſaid Lord Larborough, " by what means do you " make peace with yourſelf?"

" By reflecting, that if ſhe loves me, " ſhe will remain very happy," replied Lord Dorcheſter; " marriage is of hu- " man invention; for was it a neceſ- " ſary ceremony we muſt be all baſ- " tards, as we have no reaſon to believe " Adam and Eve had the ſanction of " the prieſt for their union. Their's " was the wedlock of hearts, the true " matrimony of affection, I and my " Ophelia will, like our firſt parents, " love by our own and nature's li- " cence, with more warmth, more ten- " derneſs, ſincerity and conſtancy, than " the obedient ſervants of the church,

" the

" the ſlaves of cuſtom can boaſt. We " will love to the end of our lives, " always aſſured of each other's affec- " tions, by unabated aſſiduity and ten- " derneſs. Neceſſity ſhall have no hand " in our union, for I will make a ſet- " tlement on her, which ſhall render " her perfectly independent of me. We " ſhall be linked only by love, and " therefore cannot doubt of the ſtrength " of the chain while neither breaks it."

" A moſt noble rapture truly," interrupted Lord Larborough; " ſince " eternal conſtancy is your ſcheme, why " not marry? Surely wedlock ſhould " only terrify the fickle."

" Have I not often told you," ſaid Lord Dorcheſter, " with how much " juſtice I diſlike matrimony? The ill " fate of all my family in that ſtate, " has created an inſurmountable aver- " ſion to it in me. Beſides, I am more " unfit for it than any man, as being ſo " fearful of loſing the affections of one " I love, that I could never be eaſy " while it was her intereſt to live with " me. It is true, I know, and love " Ophelia's ſincerity, but I am equally

" acquainted with my own temper; I
" could fear her truth and openneſs
" of heart ſhould be corrupted by our
" vile cuſtoms; ſhe might give herſelf
" to me in marriage out of prudence
" and intereſt. I would receive her as
" the gift of love alone. Her heart
" muſt give her to me, and mine re-
" ceive her as the pure votary of love;
" mine and only mine, excluſive of all
" prudential, all lucrative views. This
" is the trueſt bliſs my heart can know.
" But in the midſt of all this glorious
" imaginary felicity, comes acroſs this
" painful queſtion, oh! my friend,
" when can ſuch virtue be ſubdued? I
" fear ſhe is exalted above human
" weakneſſes, though to leave the diſ-
" poſal of herſelf to the prieſt, rather
" than to her heart, would be only
" compliance with ſervile cuſtom, and
" not virtue, which can never be the gift
" of a fooliſh ceremony; it conſiſts in
" conſtancy, not words; and we will be
" more conſtant than licenſed matrimo-
" nial couples, who love from duty;
" whoſe paſſions are ſo cool, they aſk
" leave to burn, requiring the ſanction

" of

" of a cold, withered, inſenſible prieſt,
" to whom all powerful nature is made
" to relinquiſh her ſway. Ophelia
" ought more than any one to obey
" that firſt parent, who has laviſhly
" diſpenſed to her her beſt gifts. She
" who ſtill enjoys her natural inno-
" cence, who has made uncommon
" progreſs in the knowledge of all
" good, and yet remains as ignorant
" of evil as on the day ſhe was firſt
" numbered among the ſpecies ſhe was
" born to eclipſe, has no occaſion to be
" confined to political rules, made to
" keep thoſe in order who have not a
" better guide within their own minds."

" Pray," anſwered Lord Larborough, " do not treat all the reſt of
" women-kind with ſuch contempt.
" The ignorance you boaſt of is not
" meritorious; if it is, you are the per-
" ſon who ſhould have the honour of
" it. Is there any virtue in not know-
" ing the evil ſhe has never ſeen? You
" have ſpread the veil which has con-
" cealed it all from her eyes; and then,
" like a true irrational lover, admire
" her for not ſeeing what was not viſi-

" ble to her. Her part is natural; " your contrivance is all that can create " wonder, and I can never think of it " without ſurprize. However, I can- " not imagine it poſſible to continue " this ignorance, where matter for in- " ſtruction is ſo frequent as in this " town, and to which ſome of the ac- " quaintance you have introduced her, " are not novices."

" You muſt have been wrapt in cold " indifference all your life-time," replied Lord Dorcheſter, " or you would " know that nothing is impoſſible to " a true lover. A ſhort acquaintance " with her principles, ſhewed me the " neceſſity of preſerving her from all " ſuſpicion of my deſign. The only " method was to keep her in ignorance " of the ways of men in this enlight- " ened corner of the world. From " the dull ſimplicity and innocence " in which ſhe was bred, the leaſt " ſhadow of vice of any kind ſhocks " her, by which I was convinced her " prejudices in favour of lawful uni- " ons muſt be great. This excited " my invention, and I conſidered all

" ways

" ways of keeping the difference of
" our manners from her knowledge.
" I inſtructed her ſervant, but with-
" out imparting my reaſons to her;
" and as I furniſhed her with books,
" I have carefully excluded all by
" which ſhe could form a notion of
" any cuſtoms that might raiſe ſuſ-
" picions in her mind; and this I have
" found poſſible without retarding any
" uſeful improvement of her under-
" ſtanding. When the heart does
" not dictate a probability of evil in
" others, the owner is eaſier deceived
" into a good opinion of mankind
" than you imagine. I had a deſire of
" bringing her into the world, think-
" ing it would amuſe and make her
" happier, which, next to my own
" happineſs in one point, is my firſt
" conſideration; but here was my great
" difficulty; how to prevent her ſee-
" ing, when the object was before her
" eyes, puzzled me. However, hav-
" ing great confidence in female in-
" vention, I opened my whole ſcheme
" to my couſin, Lady Paleſtine, who, I
" knew,

" knew, would willingly aſſiſt me, as
" ſhe is one of Cupid's beſt friends;
" and, like a good woman, has ſo equal
" a love for her neighbour and herſelf,
" that ſhe is glad to help them in
" any way wherein ſhe would be in-
" duſtriouſly gratified. She, in this
" reſpect, lives up to the golden rule,
" and does to others as ſhe would they
" ſhould do unto her. This made her
" fit for my purpoſe. The art ſhe
" has had to keep herſelf in high
" faſhion, and be careſſed by the
" world, and even by ſuch whoſe
" behaviour and character give one
" room to believe that the merits
" I found in her were of no uſe nor
" recommendation to them, made her
" acquaintance proper for my honeſt,
" my innocent Ophelia, at the ſame
" time ſhe was uſeful to me. I eſteem
" the purity of my angel's heart, and
" the goodneſs of her principles too
" highly, to introduce her into com-
" pany that might pervert either. It
" would be impolitick to leſſen the me-
" rits of the object of our affections in

" ſo

" ſo eſſential a point, in order to gain
" the poſſeſſion of their perſons. I have
" had great reaſon to be pleaſed with
" my choice: Lady Paleſtine has ex-
" celled herſelf in the management of
" this affair; and ſome fortunate cir-
" cumſtances have aſſiſted our de-
" ſign. Miſs Lenox's great unhappi-
" neſs at being obſerved and looked at,
" which was the neceſſary conſequence
" of her appearing in publick, was of
" excellent ſervice to us. We adviſed
" her to be ſilent as to the place of her
" birth, and all the paſſages of her paſt
" life, and this on pretence of ſaving
" her the pain of univerſal obſerva-
" tion, which otherwiſe, by their no-
" velty, would be excited. She com-
" plied; the reſt has been our care.
" You know we have reported her a
" relation of mine, of a large for-
" tune, left by a dying father to my
" guardianſhip.

" By theſe little deceits, her repu-
" tation has hitherto continued unble-
" miſhed. I verily believe the envy of
" the world would by this time have

" ſpent

" ſpent a little of it's venom in ſlan-
" der, had any other woman been in
" her place; but the innocence and
" openneſs of heart expreſſed in her
" countenance, damps all ſuſpicion,
" and diſarms ſcandal of it's ſting.

" I have likewiſe contrived to pre-
" vent all intimacies with any of her
" own ſex, except my uſeful couſin,
" leaſt converſing with them, might
" overthrow my ſcheme. I was ſome
" time ago, a little uneaſy at a great
" diſpoſition I perceived in her towards
" Miſs Baden, who was not unwilling
" to cultivate her acquaintance. I could
" not wonder at either; without ſee-
" ing all the bad qualities which many
" poſſeſs, the good in Miſs Baden's
" diſpoſition ſhines ſo clearly, that it
" could not eſcape the obſervation of
" Ophelia, who ſees by the light of
" reaſon, that beſt diſtinguiſher of
" truth. An intimacy between them
" ſeemed natural, and I feared the ill
" effects of it; but my uneaſineſs was
" perceived by my lovely charmer, and,
" I believe, a kind though ſilent com-

" pliance

" pliance with it, put a ſtop to all in-
" creaſe of acquaintance.

" I found ſhe conſtrued my diſlike in-
" to jealouſy. She has not the leaſt no-
" tion why we ſhould be jealous but of
" our friend's affections, and in that
" caſe, it muſt be equally excited by
" man or woman, who ſeems likely to
" ſhare them with us.

" I began now to have fewer appre-
" henſions than ever of her learning the
" cuſtoms of our ſex. Time and ſucceſs
" have hardened me; but inſtead of
" it another ariſes, which is what I
" have already mentioned, that I ſhall
" never find the unguarded moment
" I have ſo long waited for. To de-
" clare my intentions, or give her rea-
" ſon to find them out, would be loſ-
" ing all my hope. My ſole depen-
" dance is on the frailty of human
" kind, and ſhe ſeems to be void of
" any. I thought I had only a wo-
" man to reſiſt me; who would have
" expected that an angel ſhould be hid
" in a cottage, while we frail mortals
" inhabit palaces?"

I had

I had now heard too much; my doubts were turned into the moſt painful certainty; and I could not ſtay to liſten to more of a converſation, every word of which gave freſh pain to my heart. So I retired out of another door, and went to my own room.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLV.

UPON retiring to my chamber, I found ſome eaſe from the liberty of indulging the ſighs and tears which I had been obliged to ſuppreſs while I was ſo near the cauſe of all my grief. I was the whole night incapable of every thing but lamenting my unhappy lot, in being among a people with whom I was ſo unequally matched. The violence of my affliction perſuaded me that I hated the man who had occaſioned it; but as dejection ſucceeded to diſtraction, for by no other name can I call my firſt emotions, the neceſſity of leaving one whoſe aim was my deſtruction, informed me more certainly of the true ſtate of my heart. I found it ſtill repined at the thought of abſenting myſelf from him, whoſe preſence ought to have raiſed deteſtation in me. But this only ſerved to determine me the more ſtrongly to fly from that place, where I no longer could be ſafe, ſince I

was

was myſelf my enemy; and reſolved, if I could not command my heart, at leaſt to puniſh it.

The paſt might give me ſome room to hope ſucceſs for the future; but I would not truſt to a confidence which oftener deſtroys than ſaves, while diffidence is a wiſe preſerver, and the beſt defence of the weak. To ſtay till we are ſenſible of our frailty, is remaining too long; I was deſirous to prevent the ſenſe of it, and not run the hazard of being obliged to reproach myſelf for my own weakneſs.

Convinced that I was unhappy, I was, however, determined not to be criminal, and I could not hide from myſelf the danger to which my open and artleſs temper muſt expoſe me, when I had ſo deceitful and deſigning an adverſary. The conteſt was too unequal to venture; but it ſeemed to me as diſhonourable to attack the artleſs with arts and deceit, as to attempt the life of one who is not armed for his defence. I wondered at the ingratitude that could wiſh to turn a woman's affection into the means of making her wretched, and rob her of the pleaſure

of

of being eſteemed, and of the heart-felt joy ariſing from the conſciouſneſs of deſerving to be ſo.

I was fixed in the reſolution of leaving my houſe, and of concealing myſelf from Lord Dorcheſter, till I could contrive my return to my cottage, where I might ſeek for peace, and endeavour to forget a vicious race, whom I had known only to ſuffer by them. I thought it would not be ſafe to attempt this immediately, as I could not doubt but my Lord would take all poſſible means of diſcovering my retreat; and, ſuſpecting my real intention, would more diligently watch the road. Where to conceal myſelf I knew not; but had no hopes of ſafety among thoſe who were acquainted with me. I had now learnt to diſtruſt every one, and my too fond heart found ſome reſource in believing no man was leſs an enemy to virtue than Lord Dorcheſter.

The following night I fixed for my elopement, with which I dared truſt nobody, but was to tranſact it without any

any guide or adviſer but reſolution and fear.

Lord Dorcheſter called ſeveral times in the morning, but I did not riſe till noon, in order to avoid ſeeing him till I had acquired a ſufficient compoſure of mind to enable me to converſe.

In the afternoon he came again as I expected. I feared his ſight, though he had more reaſon to fear mine, the guilty only have cauſe to tremble; but the great change which was to ſucceed this viſit, made it appear dreadful to me. I had endeavoured to practice ſome worldly arts; I thought it was ſtrange if I had lived ſo long here without acquiring the power of diſſimulation; I tried to conceal my grieved heart under a ſmiling countenance, that I might not either puzzle my Lord, or give him room for ſuſpicion. But I had eſteemed my own abilities too highly; I was leſs improved than I could have wiſhed.

Lord Dorcheſter, at firſt coming in, addreſſed me with inexpreſſible tenderneſs, and concern for my health. The variety of emotions from the joy I felt

felt in the proofs of his affection, which would have made even ſickneſs delightful, with the pain that attended the thought of the bad deſigns it had given birth to, and yet how much I muſt ſuffer in relinquiſhing the greateſt happineſs of my life, overcame my reſolution, and brought ſuch a crowd of images to my mind, as drew a flood of tears from my eyes, which never ceaſed flowing for a quarter of an hour together, during the whole evening. My Lord appeared greatly concerned at theſe ſigns of grief, and was importunate to know the reaſon of them. I could only attribute them to diſtemper, and, according to the faſhion of the place, complain of my ſpirits. This did not make him eaſy; he declared, he could not forbear ſuſpecting ſome hidden cauſe; and by the many aſſurances of his conſtant and increaſing affection with which he endeavoured to remove my melancholy, I perceived he imagined me a prey to jealous fancies. I was glad his thoughts took that turn; for I was in great fear that my weakneſs in thus ſhewing

ſhewing the ſituation of my mind might have created better-grounded ſuſpicions; eſpecially at his going away, which was not till very late. I had not power to tell him it was time he ſhould leave me, and he was not inclined to make that diſcovery himſelf; but at laſt, the watchman forced him to obſerve the hour, and care of my health induced him to obey its call to reſt. I was determined this ſhould be the laſt interview I would ever have with him. The thought that I ſhould never ſee him more, had ſo violent an effect on my depreſſed ſpirits, that as ſoon as he was out of the room I fainted away. I believe it was not long before I recovered my ſenſes. I found myſelf in his arms, and my maid rubbing my temples, while he was holding a bottle for me to ſmell to. He had, as I afterwards learnt, returned on the noiſe I made in falling, and finding me on the floor, called my maid to aſſiſt him in bringing me again to life. The joy I felt from the tenderneſs of his behaviour, on my coming to myſelf, was ill ſuited to

my

my intention. It was long before he would leave me, but the ſecond parting was not ſo bad as the firſt. To get quit of my maid, I was obliged to go to bed. As ſoon as ſhe was out of the room, I dreſſed myſelf anew, and ſat down to write to Lord Dorcheſter, to the following purpoſe.

My Lord,

" As little as a man can deſerve to " find a place in the thoughts of one " on whom his views have been ſo " ungenerous and low, yet I cannot " forbear informing you, that a diſco- " very of your baſe deſigns has rendered " it neceſſary for me to fly you. Was " my pride equal to my love, I ſhould " be aſhamed, that in our laſt inter- " views I diſcovered ſo much ſorrow in " parting with one who never had any " true affection for me. But why " ſhould I bluſh at not ſuſpecting " intentions in you, which I thought " no heart had been bad enough to har- " bour? My own made me a dupe to " the appearance of yours. It was not " difficult

" difficult for me to believe that the ge-
" neroſity, the tenderneſs, the eſteem
" you appeared to have for me, were
" real. Though I deſerved little of
" it, it ſeemed to me leſs injurious to
" ſuppoſe you miſtaken than deceit-
" ful. The underſtanding of the wiſeſt
" man may err, but I did not imagine
" the heart of any one could be ſo
" corrupted. I own, that at this mo-
" ment I ſtill repay in real fondneſs
" all the arts you practice to make
" me believe it mutual; in the midſt
" of my reſentment my love is as
" ſtrong as ever. I am ſenſible you
" have for ever deſtroyed my happi-
" neſs; I can never enjoy a moment's
" comfort abſent from you. The hap-
" py compoſure of my mind is turned
" into diſtraction; my conſtitution is
" not equal to the ſorrows that attack
" it. But this is not my grief. I am
" the creature of Providence, and muſt,
" without repining, wait its decrees; if,
" without ingratitude, I might wiſh to
" loſe the life it has given me, I
" ſhould pray for death as the de-
" ſirable end of a miſerable being.

" One

" One effect I would gladly hope my
" ſufferings may have on you; let them
" ſhew you how wretched you aimed at
" making one who deſerved not to re-
" ceive ſo much evil at your hands.
" Think what torment the ſucceſs of
" your vile arts muſt have given me,
" ſince to avoid the chance of it I can
" without heſitation reduce myſelf to
" ſo great a misfortune as leaving the
" joy of my life, your company! Let
" this deter you for the future from
" leading others into the ſame unhappy
" circumſtances. I wiſh an amend-
" ment of your principles, for your
" own benefit; for I feel a ſincere pity
" for the ignorance you muſt live in
" of the greateſt pleaſures, thoſe ariſing
" from a truly affectionate, generous,
" pure and honeſt heart. As for my-
" ſelf, it can no longer be of farther
" conſequence to my peace; I ſhall
" not know even what paſſes here; I
" will not remain among a people to
" whom I am ſo ill ſuited. Opinion
" had raiſed you almoſt to a deity;
" finding you fall ſo far below what

" even a human creature ſhould be,
" I can't help doubting myſelf alſo,
" and therefore will never ſee you
" more. I will return to my little cot-
" tage, where I ſhall behold no actions
" but what are juſt and conſiſtent;
" where innocence is no temptation
" to vice, nor made a means towards
" the poſſeſſor's deſtruction. In that
" dear ſolitude, my love will be repaid
" by affection, by the only worthy ob-
" ject of it, and our hearts united with
" ſincerity and truth. There I lived,
" bleſſed, indeed, in innocence; all
" that was dear to me within my
" ſight; I had nothing to regret, no-
" thing to ſigh for, no thought, no
" wiſh to ſuppreſs; actuated by vir-
" tue, with virtue alone I loved my
" ſingle friend; happy in knowing no
" more, I enjoyed a conſtant ſtate of
" contentment. Think, my Lord, from
" what you have taken me, and what
" miſery you have brought on her,
" who, notwithſtanding all diſtance,
" the impoſſibility of ſeeing you again,
" and the great reaſon ſhe has to

" hate

" hate you, muſt ever remain attached
" to you in the tendereſt manner!
" This is your doing; this the effect
" you call love! This the reward of
" mine! But why ſhould I reproach
" you, when I cannot reſent as I ought?
" I am too little miſtreſs of myſelf to
" write more. Heaven preſerve you!
" may you never feel remorſe enough
" to give you equal pain to that I en-
" dure! I would have your heart im-
" prove by reaſon, and not by ſuffer-
" ing. Once more accept my prayers,
" my beſt wiſhes; you are the only ob-
" ject I have for them, I myſelf ex-
" cluded, ſince all I ought to wiſh for,
" is a total forgetfulneſs of you; and
" if I cannot part with your image,
" miſery is attached to it. If you can
" help it, do not quite forget me;
" think of me as one who has ſuch
" an affection for you, as in the great
" world cannot be equalled; think of
" me as anxious for your happineſs,
" while I am ſuffering by you; who
" could receive any evil by ſelf-con-
" demnation rather than part with you,

" rather than once ſay adieu. But it
" muſt be ſo. The God you have of-
" fended, forgive and bleſs you!"

This letter was not written without torrents of tears, with which my paper was ſo blotted, that it was ſcarcely legible; but the interruptions my ſorrow gave, took up ſo much of the little time left me, that I had not leiſure to write it over again, and if I had I might not have mended it. As ſoon as it was finiſhed, I laid it where I imagined it would be found, though not the firſt moment I was miſſing. I then put as much money in my pocket as I thought requiſite. Without ſcrupling to ſave myſelf at the expence of the perſon who had reduced me to the want of ſuch aſſiſtance, I took no more than I believed neceſſary; if I had, it would not have been ſo juſtifiable. I loaded myſelf with linen and other things that I might want, and could conveniently carry. The jewels, watches, trinkets, and every thing valuable, I put up with the money in my

my bureau, and incloſed the key of it in the letter to my Lord. Grief purifies the heart. So much had it leſſened my vanity, that things which, in poſſeſſion, had given me a fooliſh pleaſure, were now of no more worth in my eyes than a piece of glaſs. By this time day began to dawn. I ſtole down ſtairs, and unbarring the ſtreet door as gently as I could, I went out. I got through that, and the adjacent ſtreets, as quick as poſſible, and walked a great way, before people were ſtirring, without knowing where I was. I went into the firſt houſe where lodgings were to be let, and the people up, and hired a room, well ſatisfied with my ſituation, becauſe it was at a great diſtance from that I lately lived in, and from my Lord's houſe. I learnt I was in a part of the city, and took a back room, that I might run no hazard of being ſeen from the ſtreet. The people where I lodged were quiet and civil, and too buſy to be very curious.

As ſoon as I had hired my chamber, I ſhut myſelf in it, and indulged my grief with greater freedom than I had

yet ventured to do. The tears which had only fallen gently down my face as I walked through the ſtreets, for I could not confine them entirely, now came with double force, and did not ceaſe till I grew ſo weary with the agitation of my mind, want of reſt, and a walk far too long for my decayed ſtrength, that I fell aſleep for ſome hours.

This refreſhed my body, but could not relieve my heart; that remained the ſame, or rather acquired new ſtrength only to grieve with more violence.

I grew very ill by night, and kept my bed for two days. From that time my health began to mend, and I became ſomewhat more compoſed.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLVI.

LORD Larborough had placed ſpies upon me, by which means he learnt the place of my abode, and came the day after my eſcape; but I was not able to ſee him till the latter end of that week, and was then but very unfit for company. He addreſſed me in the moſt affectionate manner, "lamented my unhappy fate, and the "unworthy hands into which I had "fallen. Applauded my reſolution in "leaving Lord Dorcheſter, and admired "my innocence. He ardently wiſhed "he could have ſaved me from the "impending danger which threatened "me, without making my happineſs a "ſacrifice to my virtue. You heard," ſaid he, "lovely Ophelia, how I en-"deavoured to ſhew my friend that "he ought not to be averſe to mar-"rying you. I had done much more "at other times; I have repreſented "to him the great charm of your "innocence, which ſhould preſerve

" itſelf by diſarming all bad deſigns.
" I proved to him an alliance with
" you could not hurt his pride, ſince
" it muſt do honour to a man of
" any rank. It could not excuſe the
" fears he expreſſed of matrimony,
" as your numerous virtues ſecured him
" from every evil that can attend the
" ſtate of wedlock. In point of in-
" tereſt no man could be ſo bigotted
" to money as to think it comparable
" to your worth. Others might bring
" him gold, you would make him
" poſſeſſor of more wealth, of a no-
" bler kind of riches, than Peru or
" Mexico could yield. Theſe are the
" arguments I have uſed to perſuade
" him to marry you. But his notions
" are ſo depraved, that all I could ſay
" made no impreſſion on his mind;
" indeed, it was vain to hope it would;
" if his love, and the faireſt miracle
" of virtue, could not diſpoſe him to
" juſtice, how ſhould my arguments
" have that power? They could not be
" ſo prevalent as every look, every
" word and action of the innocent
" Ophelia muſt have been, to any one

" who

" who had the ſmalleſt ſeeds of virtue
" in their breaſt. I ſhould have be-
" lieved the moſt debauched man liv-
" ing could not have harboured a mo-
" mentary thought againſt the virtue
" which appeared ſo amiable. Pardon
" me the blaſphemies I uttered againſt
" you in the converſation you over-
" heard. They all agree with my real
" ſentiments; my heart bled for what
" you were ſuffering, while I treated
" his opinion ſo highly; but I was
" obliged to put that force on myſelf,
" to make him more openly declare
" ſentiments which I would have
" given my life to have changed into
" ſuch as would have been agreeable
" to your wiſhes, and due to your
" merits. It was with the utmoſt dif-
" ficulty I performed my taſk, and
" proſecuted a diſcourſe which tore
" my heart by friendly ſympathy with
" your's."

This elaborate ſpeech of Lord Larborough's ſurprized me a little; it ſeemed ſo honeſt and affectionate, that during ſome parts, I believed his diſpoſition was ſuitable to his expreſſions; but he

mixed ſo much flattery with his panegyricks on my virtue, that I told him, "I hoped I had, indeed, enough to "preſerve me from committing any "criminal action; but where was the "miracle of this? thouſands would do "the ſame. If it preſerved me from "cenſure, I had all I could require "from it; but I ſaw no reaſon to "commend me ſo highly for having "only done my duty, and that merely "when one virtue was concerned; a "ſmall portion to be proud of, when "we ought to be poſſeſſed of ſo many; "he could not have given me more "praiſe, had I acted up to the laws "of general perfection. In behaving "differently from what I had done, I "ſhould have been very criminal; but "I could ſcarcely think myſelf quite "juſtified, unleſs I had that proper "love for virtue which would make "me hate the perſon who ſhould form "vile ſchemes, as well as induce me to "avoid him; whereas I had not ar-"rived even at anger. Grief poſſeſſed "my whole ſoul, and left no room for "any other ſentiment. I ſtill loved to

"exceſs,

" exceſs, the man to whom I owed my " ſufferings; and while I fled from him " and reſolved never again to ſee him, " I endeavoured to excuſe him, and " blamed only education and perni- " cious cuſtom, which had, by cor- " rupting his principles, rendered me " a moſt unhappy woman." My tears flowed almoſt inceſſantly. Lord Larborough joined in them, and wept too, till I grew convinced of the pure friendſhip he profeſſed. He frequently exclaimed againſt " the baſeneſs of a " man, who could mean me ill; and " with all the appearance of ſincerity " declared, how incapable he ſhould " have been of ſuch behaviour, had " he been bleſſed with my love; he " would have adored me with a pure " devotion, have looked on Hymen as " his tutelar deity, and have eſteemed " himſelf the happieſt of mankind if " I would have conferred an eternal " obligation on him by becoming his " wife."

Many more things he ſaid to raiſe his own character, and blacken Lord Dorcheſter's, which ſerved only to increaſe

creaſe my affection, as I grieved as much for my Lord's depravity, as for my own ſufferings, independently of the connection between them.

All Lord Larborough ſaid, was uttered with ſuch an air of tenderneſs, and mixed with ſo many expreſſions of fondneſs, that, at laſt, I began to think his ſentiments were beyond thoſe of friendſhip, which I thought I muſt deteſt in a country where people can be led by love to do actions ſo unworthy of themſelves, and ſo inconſiſtent with the reſt of their character. I was fully convinced of it, when after finding fault with my lodging, and lamenting "that I, who ought to receive "the ſervices of mankind, (for he "mixed the moſt fulſome flattery with "every thing he ſaid) ſhould be void "of neceſſary attendance and conve-"nience, he ſolicited me to accom-"pany him to one he would find out "for me, where I ſhould be ſerved in "a manner worthy of me, and all "poſſible care taken to alleviate my "grief, and aſſiſt time in conquering "it." This propoſal ſtartled me. I told

told him, " that flattery was no means " of pleaſing me. I looked on it in " no better light than as an indirect " accuſation of an inſufferable vanity " and folly, ſince it ſhewed an expec- " tation of being believed. That in " a country where benevolence and " juſtice reigned, I might, indeed, " expect ſo much of the ſervice of " mankind, as tended to that mutual " defence due from all fellow crea- " tures to each other; but as here mo- " ney only obtained that aſſiſtance " which humanity ſhould give, I had " little title to any, nor the leaſt oc- " caſion for thoſe venal ſervices, which " I had been accuſtomed to perform for " myſelf. If reaſon and proper indig- " nation could not conquer my afflic- " tion, I feared it was beyond the pow- " er of any thing elſe to perform it. " But that his Lordſhip's offer ſur- " prized me; he ſeemed to have for'got " that he was inviting me into a ſitua- " tion which I had learnt from him was " ſo unuſual in England, that it was " always thought criminal." He re- plied, that " he allowed the truth

" of

" of what I alledged; but he would " remove all objections from the mali- " cious cenſures of mankind, by keep- " ing every circumſtance concerning " me ſo private, and ordering his own " viſits ſo prudently, that no one ſhould " have room to ſuſpect that I was not " wholly miſtreſs of myſelf, and every " thing belonging to me." I told him, that " hitherto I had been only un- " fortunate; what imprudence I had " been guilty of, muſt be laid to the " charge of unavoidable ignorance; but " if I was to accept his offer, I ſhould " eſteem myſelf greatly blameable. I " thought it was wrong to act con- " trary to the cuſtoms of the people " among whom we live, unleſs in con- " tradiction to their vices. Want of " concealment argued a degree of " guilt, and whether ariſing from vice " or only folly, it was our duty to " avoid it. Nothing more was required " to render me unhappy, than to be " obliged to make a ſecret of my " thoughts and actions. Beſides, I " made no doubt but the ſuſpicions of " mankind were founded on experience

" and

" and probability, which was a ſuffi-
" cient reaſon to induce me to avoid
" giving cauſe for them. That in my
" opinion a woman who did one im-
" prudent thing premeditately, gave
" good grounds to ſuſpect her of more;
" and was guilty, at leaſt, of being
" the cauſe of all the untruths people
" thought and ſaid about her, which
" was a greater load than I choſe to
" have on my conſcience. That I was
" determined to appear guiltleſs, as
" well as to be ſo; and therefore would
" continue where I was, or change
" only to ſome place of my own pro-
" viding." He ſpent no ſmall time in endeavouring to perſuade me, that " neceſſary concealments would be no " pain to any one bleſſed with the con-" ſciouſneſs of innocence." But I, at laſt, convinced him that I would not conſent to it. It was with difficulty I prevailed on him to leave me to my own thoughts, though it was really late at night. I cannot ſay they were to his honour. The treachery I had diſcovered made me now as ſuſpicious as before I was the contrary, which muſt

muſt naturally tend to the diſadvantage of Lord Larborough, ſince nothing could give me more reaſon to believe he harboured ſome bad deſign, than his endeavours to draw me into a way of life of which he had told me the impropriety, when it ſerved to get me away from Lord Dorcheſter. Could I forbear ſuſpecting them of being equally culpable? It was happy for me that they were ſo; for as I fear humanity would not have been of ſo much ſervice to me as Lord Larborough's jealouſy and deſire to get me into his power, I could not attribute what he had done to any other cauſe; ſince he could wiſh to lead me into part of the evil from which he had ſtrongly repreſented the neceſſity of my flying. I had reaſon, however, to thank Heaven that the bad intentions of one ill perſon thus ſaved me from the dangers threatened me by another, equally my enemy; and could not hate Lord Larborough for his ſentiments, ſince they turned ſo much to my benefit. But I feared I might find him ſome obſtruction to my departure, and without that addition I had too many impediments,

impediments, and no one to aſſiſt me. I dared not truſt any body; and had a mind too ill at eaſe to take any meaſures for myſelf. I could only grieve for my misfortunes, incapable of forming a rational thought towards redreſsing them. How often, in my wiſhes for the friendly relief of death, was I checked by the remembrance of my kind parent, the nurſe and inſtructor of my youth! But for the conſolation I hoped my preſence would afford her, the grave would have been my ſole deſire; for that alone I thought could bring me eaſe. But I preferred the ſuffering any evil to the increaſe of the pain I had already involuntarily given her; and this conſideration controuled my ardent wiſhes for its kind hand.

When Lord Larborough found neither perſuaſion nor flattery could prevail upon me to put myſelf into his power, he tried whether fear would not be more his friend. He peſtered me every day with his viſits, and invented new ſtories to alarm me. At one time he pretended Lord Dorcheſter had diſcovered where I was, and therefore "thought

"his

" his ſervice might not be unexception-
" able in procuring me ſome ſafer aſy-
" lum." But I told him, that " be-
" ing leſs known in the town than his
" Lordſhip, I could more ſecurely per-
" form that office for myſelf;" fully determined to conceal my new habitation with equal care from both. I gave orders to the people of the houſe to admit no one that wanted to ſee me; and tried every means to prevail on Lord Larborough to leave me, that I might ſeek another lodging, for in one reſpect he had ſucceeded, he had frightened me extremely. But, notwithſtanding my moſt preſſing intreaties, and a good deal of uncivility, for my patience was exhauſted, yet he would not go away till night: and then finding no enquiry had been made after me, I was pretty well convinced the whole was his own invention.

Another day he informed me I had got into a houſe of ill repute, opening to me a ſcene of iniquity as appeared to me entirely incredible; and I frankly told him, " it was impoſſible
" there ſhould be ſuch monſters in the
" form

" form of women as he repreſented;
" but I was, above all, ſure my land-
" lady was not of that kind, the houſe
" being extremely quiet, ſhe having lit-
" tle company, no young perſon be-
" longing to her, and beſide depend-
" ing on a ſhop for her ſupport, which
" muſt render the infamous traffick he
" mentioned contrary to her intereſt,
" ſince it would put a ſtop to her
" lawful and honeſt trade."

I grew at length ſo diſguſted with a man who could endeavour to increaſe the agony of my mind, out of ſuch baſe views as theſe various falſhoods more and more convinced me actuated him, that I could ſcarcely endure his preſence. While I believed he expoſed Lord Dorcheſter's deſigns out of real humanity, I honoured him. Virtue is a man's firſt friend, and his regard for it is never put to a ſeverer trial than when its intereſt claſhes with the ſchemes of thoſe whom he moſt loves; and therefore he who gives it its true preference is greatly to be applauded. But Lord Larborough's motives made his behaviour treacherous, and the diſcovery of them

turned

turned all the gratitude I had at firſt felt towards him, to Providence, who had a better right to it. To that was I indebted for my ſafety, which was ſecured by meeting with two men whoſe views were equally baſe, and both alike fixed on me. In the moments of my moſt exceſſive grief, I reflected on this as a bleſſing, and all my ſoul was filled with gratitude, when otherwiſe my wretchedneſs might have tempted me to an impious repining, that guiltleſs, and contrary to any voluntary ſteps of my own taking, I ſhould, by various degrees, be led to the miſery I endured.

I hoped that deſpair might at laſt incline Lord Larborough to aſſiſt me in my return to my cottage; but I had vainly flattered myſelf; he would not even give me any advice as to the manner I ſhould contrive it; and inſtead of removing the difficulties that lay in my way, took a pleaſure in ſtarting new ones. All the benefit I reaped from a behaviour which he called ungrateful, was an abatement in the frequency of his viſits; and that I confeſs was ſome reward.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLVII.

FOR a fortnight after I eſcaped from Lord Dorcheſter's, I had lived without ſeeing any one except Lord Larborough. But the people where I lodged, having as much pity for my melancholy as they had leiſure to feel, were, at laſt, ſo preſſing with me to drink tea with them, that I could no longer refuſe it, though I was not very fit for company.

They had been ſo obliging as to order their ſervant to admit no body, in compliance with my deſire; but before we parted, by miſtake, ſhe brought in a viſitor, who, the maid knowing their regard to him, imagined muſt be agreeable. It was ſo indeed to me, for it proved to be Mr. South.

His behaviour when I was Mrs. Herner's priſoner, had created in me ſo much eſteem, that I often begged my Lord to give him the firſt great living in his gift which ſhould prove vacant, and he had promiſed me he would do it.

As deſirous as I had been of remaining concealed, I could not be ſorry to ſee Mr. South. He ſeemed rejoiced to meet with me again, and aſked leave to wait on me the next morning; very much puzzled by the way I appeared in, as it differed greatly from the rank he imagined me of, by things he heard after my leaving his neighbourhood. I was not without my reaſons for being glad to have ſome private converſation with him. I had ſufficient proof that he was fit to be truſted, and hoped with his aſſiſtance to get ſoon from London.

He had not been long with me before I communicated to him the difficulties of my ſituation, and told him, that "although I had once rejected his "friendly offers of contriving my eſcape, "I ſhould now be highly indebted to "him, if he would order my journey "for me in the way he thought moſt "ſafe from diſcovery. That I hoped "Lord Dorcheſter had taken for granted "that I was returned to my aunt before "that time, and therefore would have "no ſuſpicions of finding me on the "road; but that to prevent it more

"certainly,

" certainly, it might be beſt to go " round by ſome country that did not " lie directly in the way." He was greatly affected with my diſtreſs, and tried all the powers of perſuaſion to compoſe my mind. He offered to go to Lord Dorcheſter, in order to learn whether the certainty of being unable to ſucceed in his intentions might not make him glad to marry me. But this I abſolutely refuſed. I had pride enough to think one with his principles did not deſerve me; but there were conſiderations of ſtill more weight; the account he gave of his averſion to marriage, and the impropriety of his own temper for that ſtate, gave a woman reaſon to fear ſhe might not be happy as his wife: I had already undergone the worſt part of the pains of ſeparation; it would have been very ſimple to ſubject myſelf to ſuffer it all over again, when by living longer with him, my affection was ſtill increaſed; for with all his faults, I ſaw him amiable beyond expreſſion. Beſides, as well as I loved him, I would not have turned beggar, no not even for himſelf. What happineſs could I have expected from a love which

which I thought his actions proved was not founded on eſteem! Marriage would not make me ſee it in a different light, as I could not but know the deſire of it aroſe in him merely from ungovernable paſſion, not principle, and I muſt therefore always fear his repenting it, as he could not believe me more worthy of being for ever united to him than before I left him.

I was ſo poſitive in the point, that Mr. South did not at all inſiſt on the execution of his offer, but, on the contrary, commended my ſpirit, and appeared extremely pleaſed with it; the reaſon of which I did not find out till the next day, and then admired the generoſity of his mind, in having been ſo ready to undertake an office wherein he certainly could not wiſh to be employed.

In the ſecond viſit, he begged I would forgive his renewing the offer I had once refuſed of the whole ſervice of his life and fortune. He preſſed it in the genteeleſt and tendereſt manner imaginable. I told him, "I was very ſorry he had "ſtill a wiſh depending on me, which "I could not grant; but that I was ab-"ſolute in my determination to return

"to

" to my aunt, and on no account could " think of marrying a man whom I did " not love better than any other in the " world." He replied, that " he knew " his misfortune in that reſpect; but " would never repine at it, if I would " but grant him the ſecond place in my " eſteem, and give an opportunity to " his ſincere affection to make him, " in time, happy in the poſſeſſion of " my heart." He added, that " the " delicacy which made me averſe to " marriage in the preſent ſituation of " my mind, was a ſufficient aſſurance " that if I was married to him I would " join my endeavours to his to get the " better of a love which my principles " would not ſuffer me to encourage; he " would wait thoſe happy effects with " patience, and with gratitude acknow- " ledge the preſent bleſſing of being " united to me; which he ſhould prefer " to the poſſeſſion of the whole heart of " any other woman." In this manner did he importune me long, and very reluctantly believed that I was immoveable on this ſubject. I grieved to afflict him, but what could I do? I could not

marry him; it was better, therefore, to repreſs his hopes at once. This topick made him ſo little fit for other converſation, that during this viſit I got no intelligence with regard to my leaving London.

The next day he ſeemed eaſier than when he left me, and agreed to aſſiſt me as expeditiouſly as poſſible. We determined that I ſhould take a coach to myſelf, and go through Northamptonſhire into Oxfordſhire, and then ſtrike into the Weſtern road; and he promiſed, that the day following he would ſeek for one. I wiſhed him leſs ſlow in procuring the means of my departure; could I have tranſacted it myſelf, I ſhould have proceeded with more haſte. If an unhappy perſon could be ſo inhuman as to receive comfort from perceiving others were ſo as well as herſelf, I might have found ſome conſolation the next morning from a ſcene to which I was witneſs; I happened, by chance, to be in a little room belonging to the people of the houſe, that had a door and a window into the ſhop; I ſaw a very pretty lady making ſome purchaſe there, when

at

at once I heard her ſcream, and a gentleman, whoſe face I could not ſee, expreſs great ſatisfaction at meeting her. Her ſurprize gave him time to reproach her for "having ſo long avoided him, "refuſing both his viſits and his letters, denying him all opportunity of "juſtifying himſelf for an event in "which ſhe muſt acknowledge he was "not to blame." She ſtruggled to get from him, and begged he would let her go; but he held her hand ſo faſt, that ſhe was obliged to hear him proteſt the moſt violent paſſion, and aſſure her that "he "had taken all proper meaſures to bring "her to the appointed place, but had "been ſtrangely diſappointed in having "another lady brought inſtead of her."

Your Ladyſhip may imagine, that one whoſe heart, like mine, was filled with love, would be attentive to any thing that had the leaſt relation to it; but I became ſtill more ſo on what the gentleman ſaid. By her endeavours to get from him, I, at laſt, ſaw his face, and perceived it was the perſon to whom I had been carried in my way to London.

The lady declared ſhe would raiſe an outcry if he did not go farther from her, and leave her at liberty. My landlady then ſpoke very ſternly, and deſired he would not trouble any one in her ſhop, but let the lady alone. He no ſooner let go her hand, than ſhe ran to the ſtreet door, but was ſtopped by his placing himſelf between her and it. When ſhe found an attempt to get from him that way was vain, ſhe turned ſhort, and ſeeing the door which opened into the room where I was, ſhe ſprung with ſuch force againſt it, that not ſhutting very well, ſhe broke it open, and had bolted it on the inſide before her lover could reach it.

Seeing me, ſhe begged I would protect her, and keep her from that man. I carried her up ſtairs into my apartment, the door of which I faſtened, and left the gentleman to the diſpoſal of my landlady. The poor lady was no ſooner eaſed of part of her fear, than ſhe fell into a fit, which greatly alarmed me, but I durſt not open the door to call any one. When ſhe came to herſelf, ſhe burſt into tears. Her caſe, in

in ſome degree, reſembled mine, which made me accompany her in weeping.

She begged me again, not to let the man from whom ſhe had fled come up ſtairs. I told her, "I had once ignorantly been her protector, and that now I would be ſo deſignedly." I then informed her that I was the perſon who had been carried to his Lordſhip's houſe when he expected her, and gave her an account of my reception, and what ſucceeded it.

She ſeemed to receive ſome ſatisfaction from finding herſelf with one who knew ſome part of her hiſtory, but expreſſed her aſtoniſhment at ſeeing me in ſuch an habitation, having, as ſhe ſaid, "underſtood that I was a relation of Lord Dorcheſter; and from the diſturbance he had been in, ſhe could ſuppoſe no other; and yet the place in which I now lived was not at all proper for any of his family."

So many circumſtances in what either ſaid touched ſome tender part of the other's heart, that more was expreſſed by tears than by words. They were the only anſwers I made to her expreſ-

ſions of ſurprize, till I found ſhe miſconſtrued them, by her telling me, that "ſhe feared Lord Dorcheſter was "not proof againſt pride and beauty, "which, together, made men do very "wrong things. She had had a better "opinion of his Lordſhip; his behaviour "to her deſerved eternal gratitude; "but ſhe was afraid I had not an equal "obligation to him. She aſſured me "ſhe pitied me ſincerely, for that my "youth, and the very great amiableneſs "of his Lordſhip, were ſtrong excuſes, "if I obſerved a different behaviour for "the future, offering me any kind of "aſſiſtance in her power, and exhorting "me to a regular life." Theſe ſuſpicions raiſed my indignation; I could not forbear anſwering with great warmth, that "her opinion injured me greatly, "and it was cruel, by ſuch an imputa-"tion, to add to the affliction I was "under."

She begged my pardon in the handſomeſt manner, made all kind of ſubmiſſions, and excuſed herſelf ſo well on the probability of the thing, that I forgave her, and complied with her requeſt

queſt in relating to her, in as few words as poſſible, the occaſion of the difference ſhe ſaw in my ſituation. She ſhewed a very real compaſſion for me, and offered to take me home with her to her aunt's, where they would carefully conceal me. But "I entreated her not "even to mention me to that relation, "as it muſt redound to my Lord's diſ-"honour; and I thought myſelf ſo ſafe "where I was, that it would not be ad-"viſable to change my abode." Her fear leſt her lover ſhould have ſet ſpies at our door, made her glad to remain the whole day with me; during which I learnt, that her father had faithfully kept the agreement made with him by Lord Dorcheſter, and her aunt had behaved very kindly to her; but that ſhe had been obliged to make herſelf an abſolute priſoner ever ſince ſhe came to town, having never been able to venture into any publick place, or large company, for fear of meeting that vile man from whom ſhe had been ſo fortunately delivered. "Not," ſhe added, that "ſhe appre-"hended any other harm from ſeeing "him in publick but the keeping alive

" a paſſion which it was neceſſary to her
" peace to extinguiſh; ſhe owned ſhe
" had not been able to do it, which made
" her extremely unhappy, and had occa-
" ſioned her ſuffering exceſſively during
" that interview between them to which
" I had been a witneſs."

Her lover omitted no means of ſeeing or writing to her, after he found where ſhe was gone. He attempted to viſit her continually, but always received a denial at the door; he contrived a thouſand ways to convey letters to her; he often had them directed by other people, in hopes, that not knowing the hand, ſhe would open them; but being conſtantly on her guard, ſhe never read one, tho' for any thing ſhe knew ſome of them might be from other people; but the only means ſhe had of certainly avoiding to receive his letters was to accept none but ſuch as were in the hands of her uſual correſpondents. Her care had anſwered ſo well, that ſhe never before met him.

It was plain, from his diſcourſe, that he imagined her behaviour proceeded from reſentment at not having been carried to his houſe. I found ſhe was as weak

weak as myſelf; ſhe was ſtill very much in love with him, and appeared extremely unhappy, though ſhe ſaid ſhe was grown eaſier before this unlucky interview. She told me, "her intention "was to perſuade her aunt to live in "the country, where ſhe hoped, by ab-"ſence and reaſon, to conquer this un-"fortunate paſſion. For ſhe took no joy "in ſociety, nor did it afford the leaſt "relief to her ſpirits. I once," added ſhe, "by chance met his wife, who ſeem-"ed not leſs unhappy than myſelf, and "I felt almoſt equal pity for her. In-"ſtead of looking on her with the diſlike "generally borne to a rival, I conceived "a kind of love for her as a fellow-ſuf-"ferer, and could not forgive myſelf, "for having, perhaps, been a means of "creating part of the uneaſineſs which "appeared in her countenance, though "I had innocently offended againſt "her; her Lord being the cruel injurer "of both."

By enquiring into his character, ſhe learnt that his Lady was a woman of very great fortune, whom he married in little more than a year before he came

into her father's neighbourhood, having gained her affections by a very aſſiduous courtſhip, to which her riches alone had tempted him.

The ſimilitude between this young lady's fate and mine, diſpoſed us well towards each other, and, before we parted, we ſhould have been glad to have agreed on a means of meeting again, but I dared not venture to her end of the town, nor could ſhe come where I was without danger of meeting the man ſhe wiſhed to avoid, as he might probably hope that a love ſo tender as he knew her's once was, would, when her firſt anger was abated, relent on what he had ſaid, and that ſhe would come again, where ſhe might hope another time to ſee him. Theſe conſiderations obliged us to take a final leave, only ſhe inſiſted on my informing her, by a line, when I ſhould be got ſafely out of town, which ſhe adviſed me to attempt cautiouſly, but reſolutely, tho' ſhe owned ſhe was ſorry Lord Dorcheſter ſhould have any cauſe to grieve; for notwithſtanding his having acted an unworthy part, yet her gratitude for the great benefit he had conferred on her, made

made her wiſh him not to ſuffer by it; adding, that "I muſt allow this was "due to one who had preſerved her "from being the unhappieſt wretch on "earth; but yet ſhe ſhould be very "ſorry that he ſhould commit a wrong "action, who had deſerved ſo much "honour from having prevented ano-"ther from doing one." We exchanged mutual good wiſhes, and parted.

How much are the orders of Providence perverted! Our affections ſeem given as the ſources of happineſs, but by the bad qualities of mankind are frequently made the great ſprings of our miſery. While they correſpond with virtue, they alone give us a notion of true bliſs; but when once they are connected with various kinds of vice, how wretched do they make both the vicious perſon, and thoſe who are the objects of their ill-founded affections.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLVIII.

THE next morning, when Mr. South went to hire an equipage for me, as he had promiſed, he perceived a man ſauntering in the inn yard, who obſerved him while he was making the bargain, and followed him at a diſtance, at his return. Mr. South fearing it might be ſome ſpy of Lord Dorcheſter's, went home, inſtead of coming to me. He learnt of the people of the houſe where he lodged, that after he was gone in, the man enquired his name, and ſome other particulars. He was ſo cautious leſt the place of my abode ſhould be diſcovered thro' his means, that he would not ſtir out of his lodgings till the following day; but he had not been long with me, before the ſame perſon came after him, having been directed from his houſe, with a meſſage from Lord Dorcheſter, deſiring to ſpeak with him then, if he was at leiſure. This ſurprized us, as they had not the leaſt acquaintance, and made us ſuſpect that, upon laying circum-

circumſtances together, his Lordſhip thought Mr. South might be able to give him ſome information about me.

I was deſirous of moving my habitation directly, that he might be able to ſay, with truth, he knew not where I was; but he differed from me in this; he ſaid, that "Lord Dorcheſter had no "power over me, nor could a man of "honour attempt to uſe force to pre-"vent my purſuing my intended jour-"ney; that he would take care I ſhould "have the liberty of a free-born wo-"man, and not be detained by any "one. If his Lordſhip kept ſo ſtrict "a watch, I ſhould ſcarcely be able "to get off undiſcovered; and there-"fore it was better to do it openly and "boldly; offering to ſee me ſafe to "the end of my journey." As his profeſſion obliged him to ſome dependence on the favour of thoſe who could aſſiſt in his preferment, and as I hoped Lord Dorcheſter would perform the promiſe he had given me, I rejected this propoſal, very unwilling to do him an injury in return for the obligations he had conferred on me, by thus neglecting

lecting his own intereſt for my good. He replied, that "he could never re-
"ceive ſo much true ſatisfaction from
"any thing, as from doing me ſervice;
"that he ſhould have only this one op-
"portunity of enjoying ſo great a gra-
"tification; which, ſince I could not be
"prevailed with to make him happy,
"would be always reflected on by him
"as the darling moment of his life;"
and that "it would be the higheſt cru-
"elty to refuſe the acceptance of his
"beſt ſervices, the recollection of which
"would ſweeten all his future cares or
"pains; and as I could give but a very
"imperfect account of the place from
"which I had been taken, he could
"not venture me with any other guide
"than himſelf." He left me without waiting for an anſwer.

His reſolution diſtreſſed me. I could not bear to be detrimental to his intereſts, though I was convinced that with truth he ſaid they weighed leſs with him than the pleaſure of doing one friendly action: but ſuch generoſity ſhould meet an equal return; and I would not in this have given way to him,

him, could I have avoided it. But his abſence robbed me of the power of reſiſting his kind intention, and, indeed, the difficulty of finding out the place to which I was to be carried, from the very imperfect hints I could give, was ſo great, that there was ſome danger that none but ſo very aſſiduous a friend would have taken the pains to have ſought it out; which he intended to have done while I remained on the borders of Wales till he could direct the vehicle in the right courſe. I was impatient to know the occaſion of Lord Dorcheſter's ſending for him, and yet it ſhould have ſeemed of little importance to me. My departure was determined. If he would have fixed me out of his power, and complied with my terms, which the cenſoriouſneſs of this country, founded on the diſſolute manners of the people, would have required to make me acknowledged as innocent as I was, I would not have ſtaid. I could not accept an obligation which I never would return. The cuſtoms of mankind, and the different opinion I had of my Lord to what I formerly entertained, rendered

it

it impoſſible for me to live with the ſame frequent intercourſe and perfect confidence which till then had been the ſource of all my joys. Without that, what charms could any place have for me? The more I reflected, the ſtronger was my reſolution to fly it, as I would the peſtilence, leſt the contagion ſhould reach me, and I be infected with their immorality.

While I was in the midſt of theſe reflections, I heard ſome one coming up ſtairs to my room. Full of expectation of Mr. South, I ran to the door to meet him; but how great was my ſurprize at ſeeing, inſtead of him, Lord Dorcheſter. I cried out, and ſunk into a chair, my ſtrength failing me. He was in too great a rapture to think of the effect his ſudden appearance had on me. How far above deſcription were his tranſports on ſeeing me again! He embraced me with an eagerneſs, which, however innocent I once thought it, his own words had inſtructed me too well not to ſuffer; and the deſire of repelling the familiarity, I believe, recovered me ſooner than I ſhould otherwiſe have been. All

he

he ſaid were incoherent, paſſionate expreſſions of his joy. My ſenſations were more ſilent: I was as unable to ſpeak as he was to preſerve any regularity in what he ſaid. Love, reſentment, grief, and fear, divided my heart. Each alike ſtrove for utterance, and therefore rendered me dumb; till he cried, "ſpeak "to me, my charmer, my angel; ſpeak; "no words can be ſo cruel as this ſi- "lence. Your voice muſt delight "whatever ſubject you chuſe, but let "it not be a harſh one; pity and for- "give a man whoſe whole bliſs is cen- "tered in you. Will you, can you "pardon me?"

"Can my forgiveneſs be of any "worth," I replied, "to one who "could long harbour a wiſh to make "me ſo criminal that I could not have "pardoned myſelf? If it was of value, "why would you deſire to rob me of "it, to whom it muſt be of moſt con- "ſequence."

"Upbraid me not," anſwered he, "with errors that make me wretched. "If you knew how much I deſerve your "pity, forgiveneſs muſt ſucceed your "compaſſion.

" compaſſion. All my life ſhall be de-
" voted to extenuate my offence. Ac-
" tions proceeding from the trueſt, the
" pureſt love, ſhall plead the excuſe of
" my injurious deſigns. Believe my
" word; I have never broken it; I will
" not riſe from your feet till you aſſure
" me of my pardon." " Riſe then,
" now, my Lord," ſaid I; " anger
" maintains much ſhorter poſſeſſion of
" my mind than grief: I can ſuffer, but
" not reſent. From my heart I forgive
" all the miſery you have inflicted, and
" the greater ſtill which you intended
" me. I forgive you your conſtant
" endeavours to create a love in me,
" which could only tend to my unhap-
" pineſs. I will not exclude even this
" laſt pain, this interview, which tears
" my heart: it is your inflicting, and
" therefore I will receive it with pa-
" tience; but I had hoped to be ſettled
" in peace without undergoing any new
" conflicts; I would not have troubled
" you in the ſearch of tranquillity; a
" bleſſing hard to find, for a heart ſo
" fond, ſo tender as mine; one that is
" by you taught all the anguiſh that the

" higheſt

" higheſt degree of ſenſibility can give.
" It was, before I knew you, in the en-
" tire poſſeſſion of reſt and peace; had
" no wiſh ungratified, no fear, no jarr-
" ing paſſions to torment it. This
" dreadful change I pardon you; and
" while I am ſeeking in my ſolitude for
" my former eaſe, I will pray for your
" felicity, and tears ſhall waſh away all
" reſentment; I might be happy, if
" they could drown remembrance too."

Tears eaſed the rack I was upon, and gave my Lord time to deſire me not to talk of returning to my cottage, for it was uniting death with the healing ſound of pardon. " If you love me," continued he, " can you wiſh for ſuch
" a ſeparation? You have now no rea-
" ſon to fly me. I have no concealed
" deſign. I was, indeed, greatly pre-
" judiced againſt marriage, but you
" have removed it all; I now look on
" it as a ſtate of bliſs, if you are my
" companion in it; and pray for it
" more devoutly than ever martyr did
" for Heaven. Indeed, I have had my
" martyrdom; no tyrant could inflict
" a torment beyond what your ab-

" ſence

" ſence has made me ſuffer. What bit-
" ter accuſations have I not made
" againſt myſelf, for permitting preju-
" dice to get the better of the trueſt
" love that ever poſſeſſed the heart of
" man. If you are only indifferent,
" mere pity will move you to comply.
" If you do not hate me, you will con-
" ſent to become my dear, my wedded
" wife directly; you will relieve my
" mind from its preſent ſufferings; and
" put it in my power to make what re-
" compence I can for the trouble I have
" cauſed you."

" That I love you," I replied, " I
" am much too well convinced by pain-
" ful experience; but you have ſo for-
" feited my eſteem, that I cannot com-
" ply with your propoſal. I could not
" be happy if I was married to you,
" conſequently ſhould not make you ſo.
" Your paſſion for me is the ſame it
" was, all the difference is in the com-
" panions of it. While accompanied
" by hope, you know how little I was
" obliged to you for it; now deſpair has
" taken its place, it has blinded you, and
" I will believe you think your affection

" all

" all you ſay it is; but was your deſpair
" to ceaſe, you would find your miſtake
" too late, after we were both made ſa-
" crifices to the deception. I have loſt
" all my confidence in you, and deteſt
" the reſt of your nation. I will go
" where I ſhall be ſecluded from man-
" kind, where virtue makes every ac-
" tion open and intelligible; there I
" am capable of living happily, without
" learning the arts that here hide every
" real thought. If this reſolution is
" painful to you, make it likewiſe be-
" neficial; truſt me, ſo corrupt a peo-
" ple cannot be taught virtue, but by
" ſuffering. Affliction will purify a
" heart perverted by education and
" cuſtom; it takes off the varniſh from
" glaring vices, and ſhews them in their
" own dark colours. If you really ſuf-
" fer, conſider to what it is owing, learn
" to hate vice, which as certainly carries
" its puniſhment as virtue does its re-
" ward along with it. But why ſhould
" I think you can ſuffer long enough to
" do you any good! Your heart is not
" made like mine, therefore I cannot
" judge of it." " Can you," cried my
Lord,

Lord, "kindly ſhed theſe tears to part "with me, and yet accompany them "with ſo cruel a declaration of your in-"tention?" He omitted nothing that he thought could prevail with me, and ſo far did he ſucceed, that had I known how much I ſhould have been affected I would not have ſtaid to hear him, for I could not have believed my reaſon ſtrong enough to reſiſt my own agitation of mind, and the diſtraction he appeared in. He ſaw my diſtreſs, but receiving hope from it, cruelly continued his perſuaſions. I would have left him, but he held me faſt, proteſting he would never let me go till I promiſed to be his wife. He offered me the diſpoſal of half his fortune to make me leſs dependent; but when our eaſe of heart depends ſo entirely on another's love, what freedom can money give us?

I know not whether I could for ever have refuſed to comply; but happily for me, his reaſon failed him before he had ſufficiently conquered mine to get my conſent; his ſpirits were ſo oppreſſed, he became quite ſpeechleſs, and almoſt ſenſeleſs. I was half diſtracted; but as ſoon

as

as he began to come out of this fit, to avoid prolonging a ſcene ſo difficult for me to ſupport, I left the room, though not without taking a kinder farewel than ſeemed conſiſtent with a deſire never to ſee him again, which I begged, while, with tears, I kiſſed his hand. He had only power to look up at me, with dying eyes, ſwimming in tears. Thus I left him: but how hard it was to do ſo, none can know but thoſe who have loved as well and gone through as ſevere a trial.

I ſhut myſelf into another room, there to give way to the diſtraction of my mind, which was ſo exceſſive, that when Mr. South came I was not capable of attending or ſpeaking to him. He was greatly touched, and endeavoured to ſoothe and compoſe me; but finding it impoſſible, he went away, unable to ſupport the ſight of me in that diſtreſs. The next time Mr. South came, he found me more capable of hearing what had paſſed after Lord Dorcheſter ſent for him.

He told me, that my Lord was waiting for him, and as ſoon as the ſervant introduced him, aſked, with the utmoſt impatience,

impatience, if he could impart any news of Miſs Lenox? Mr. South expreſſed ſome ſurprize at his Lordſhip's applying to him, who alledged for the reaſon of it, "the knowledge of the regard he "had for me, and the reaſon I had to "place a confidence in him, which "made him appear the propereſt per-"ſon to whom I could have recourſe, "in a ſituation where, without the aſ-"ſiſtance of one more accuſtomed to "the world, it muſt be very difficult "to conduct myſelf. That this proba-"bility was turned into almoſt a cer-"tainty, by the account of one of the "people whom he had in pay at every "place in town where equipages were "to be hired, to prevent my getting "away from it without his knowledge. This man told him "he had ſeen a "clergyman hire a chariot which he "had looked at, and ſeemed to prefer "to the reſt for having canvaſſes to "let down before the glaſſes; at leaſt "he could gueſs no other reaſon for the "preference he gave it, as it was ra-"ther the worſt vehicle there. That "upon this, his ſpy followed him to his

"lodgings,

" lodgings, and learnt his name. My " Lord then, in the moſt affecting " terms, conjured Mr. South to tell " him where I was.

He anſwered, that " he did not know, " though he was obliged to chance for " finding me out, but that he muſt beg " to be excuſed giving an information " that might make a reſolution more " difficult to execute, which was already " almoſt too hard for a woman who, " except virtue, loved nothing ſo well " as his Lordſhip.

My Lord ſaid, " he hoped they were " not inconſiſtent: he would not have " aſked him for any information of " which he deſigned to make a bad uſe. " He had no other wiſh but to marry " me, and wanted to ſee me, to obtain " my conſent, together with my for- " giveneſs for what was paſt, and hoped " it might be gained, as he had only " mentally offended, and would devote " his life to make me reparation." He added, " that he could not live without " me, and ſhould gratefully receive me " on my own terms, if I pleaſed, that " very day; for no time was early " enough for his impatience."

Mr. South offered to come and tell me his preſent ſentiments; but my Lord begged he might not defer ſeeing me, and prevailed on him to direct him where to find me.

After Lord Dorcheſter left me, he ſent again for Mr. South, who found him in a way that the deſcription alone moved my heart too much at. He begged Mr. South's aſſiſtance in his endeavours to prevail on me to deſiſt from my purpoſe of never ſeeing him again.

Mr. South promiſed he would give it him; but added, that "if my love for "his Lordſhip could not prevail, he "feared all other advocates would prove "very weak. That if I was able to "perſiſt in my reſolution, notwithſtanding the diſtreſs I ſaw him in, in the "interview, which, he imagined, would "have ended in our union, he did not "flatter himſelf he could make me "change it."

I told him "he had undertaken an "unſucceſsful cauſe: that his expecta-"tions of the little he ſhould be able to "effect were ſo well founded, I need "give no other reaſons to perſuade him "to deſiſt from a perſecution, with

"which,

" which, however obſtinately, I had " determined not to comply; yet to " reſiſt was very painful to me.

That I might be removed from theſe obſtructions to my intended departure, which I feared would grow too ſtrong for my reſolution, I deſired Mr. South would procure me an equipage for the next day, without imparting to my Lord the ſuddenneſs of my determination. He promiſed to fulfil my requeſt. I wiſhed myſelf in ſome place where my Lord could not find me, for I feared I ſhould not be proof againſt another interview, though I was fortified by the full belief that I could not be happy with one ſo defective in his principles, on the goodneſs of which muſt depend the felicity of all thoſe ſmall ſocieties. As eſteem is a neceſſary foundation for a laſting love, I could not believe this change in him aroſe from an amendment of heart, but from deſpair of ſucceſs in his former ſchemes, and was convinced it would therefore be madneſs to unite myſelf for life with one who had no better motive; for no ſuffering can equal that of being married to a man of whom one has a bad opinion.

As ſoon as Mr. South had reported his ſmall ſucceſs, Lady Paleſtine was ſent by my Lord to try whether ſhe could prevail. Your Ladyſhip may imagine I did not give her a very cordial reception. She took no notice of it, but addreſſed me with fondneſs, and began to combat my intention by ſetting before me all the happineſs that attended my conſent to marry my Lord. Inſtead of endeavouring to excuſe his faults, ſhe only ſaid ſlightly, that no other man would have preſerved ſo blameleſs a behaviour, and proceeded to ſhew an union with him in the moſt pleaſing light. Her aim was to bring my affections to her ſide of the argument.

I did not let her go on long; but told her, "it well became one who could con-
"deſcend to connive at, and aſſiſt ſuch
"villainous deſigns as had been har-
"boured againſt me, to endeavour to
"prevail by the force of paſſion, againſt
"the reaſon which ought to ſubdue it;
"but that I was not to be moved by ar-
"guments ſo wrongly applied, and ut-
"tered by one from whom every thing
"muſt appear in a ſuſpicious light, and
"who would diſgrace even the cauſe of
"virtue by defending it. Without ſay-
"ing

" ing much more, I affronted her, and " freed myſelf from her importunities."

Lord Dorcheſter came ſoon after; but I heard a coach ſtop, and fearing it was him, hid myſelf ſo well, that tho' the houſe was diligently ſearched, they could not find me. After that he ſent me a letter; but I did not chuſe to give him more arms againſt myſelf, ſo ſent it back with a deſire he would leave me in peace.

Before I had time to compoſe my ſpirits, Miſs Baden was brought up ſtairs. I was greatly ſurprized to ſee her; but my heart was ſo great a ſtranger to pleaſure, that I could not find words to expreſs what I felt at her viſit, ſo ſoon as ſhe did the occaſion of it. " I am come," ſaid ſhe, " to plead a cauſe, in which I find " ſo many others have been unſucceſsful, " that although to be employed might " raiſe my vanity, it ought to create " fears in me that all my endeavours " will prove fruitleſs. My regard for " you, the pleaſure I have always ima- " gined I muſt find in your friendſhip, " and pity for one whoſe diſtreſs would " move a harder heart than mine, makes " me wiſh for eloquence enough to pre- " vail in my ſuit." She proceeded to

tell me that ſhe had had a viſit from Lord Dorcheſter. As ſoon as he came in he told her, that " tho' he had never " before had the honour of waiting on " her, yet he truſted in her good nature " for his pardon, when ſhe knew that he " had placed all hopes of the happineſs " of his life in her."

He related to her every thing that had paſſed between him and me, from the time of his firſt ſeeing me till his laſt trial, by Lady Paleſtine, of prevailing on me to lay aſide my intention of returning to my aunt. He added, that " he knew I had " a good opinion of her, and he had never " ſeen ſo ſtrong an inclination in me to " any other perſon; he therefore hoped " ſhe might be more ſucceſsful, if ſhe " would kindly undertake his cauſe."

I told her "it was a bad one, and I won- " dered ſhe would engage in it." She replied, " that I ought not to expect con- " ſummate virtue among a degenerate " people; that it was ſcarcely poſſible to " find a man who had any ſcruples in " regard to his behaviour to women. " She gave me a thouſand inſtances " wherein the men of the beſt characters " had failed; telling me they eſteemed

" matrimony

" matrimony as ſo entirely a political in-
" ſtitution, that though each might ap-
" prove of it in ſociety, many did not
" like it for themſelves. That they
" looked on the life of a woman who
" lived with them without being mar-
" ried, as generally moſt happy. That
" my Lord, in the care he had taken of
" my reputation, had ſhewn a delicacy
" and an affection for me of which few
" men were capable: that in every other
" virtue he was as nearly perfect as a hu-
" man creature could be. She told me
" how much I ought to allow for the
" force of cuſtom and education; theſe
" had both tended to make him look on
" chaſtity as a very ſmall virtue, for that
" it was even made the ſubject of ridi-
" cule in ſuch men as were poſſeſſed of it."

In ſhort, ſhe ſaid ſo much in his excuſe, that although I could not allow that cuſtom ſhould ſo far overcome truth, I found ſome ſatisfaction in thinking him leſs criminal, but ſtill ſaw him too much ſo not to reſiſt all her importunities, and ſhe was obliged to ſubmit to my obſtinacy.

I ſhould be deficient in ſincerity, were I not to confeſs that Miſs Baden's per-

ſuaſions a little ſtaggered my reſolution. I ſometimes was inclined to doubt whether Lord Dorcheſter could be ſo much to blame, ſince ſhe undertook to excuſe him, and whether I might not be allowed to forgive one I loved ſo tenderly, ſince a woman who had ſo much motive could ſo eaſily acquit him. But I ſoon became ſenſible this was the dictate of my paſſion. Bad examples and pernicious habits, had, in a degree, perverted Miſs Baden; the frequency of vice had deadened her ſenſe of it; but I had no ſuch excuſe; cuſtom had not confounded my ideas of right and wrong, and therefore to have united myſelf with a perſon whom I knew guilty of vice, was, in a degree, to become vicious; and I could not have a ſtronger reaſon to avoid it than Miſs Baden herſelf furniſhed me with, for ſince a woman of virtue could, by example, have her principles ſo much perverted, the danger I ſhould run by marrying Lord Dorcheſter was obvious; and to put ourſelves in a ſituation that muſt hazard our integrity, is a great proof that it is not at that time ſufficiently ſtrong. I very frankly told Miſs Baden how much

much more prevalent I found her example than her arguments, for that "ſhe "could urge no reaſons which would "ſo ſtrongly induce me to live with "Lord Dorcheſter, as her being capable "of urging them would deter me from "it, ſince ſhe thereby ſhewed me the "danger that aroſe from a communication with mankind; for I ſhould "fear that my principles might be corrupted by the ſame means that had "perverted her's. Therefore all ſhe "could ſay only proved to me the neceſſity of flying mankind, if I deſigned to "hold faſt my integrity as long as I "lived."

Miſs Baden ſmiled, without any appearance of reſentment at what I had ſaid, and only anſwered, that "ſhe ſaw I "was determined to make no difference "between excuſing the guilt of others, "and accompanying them in the crime; "and ſince I was reſolved to retire from "the world, in order to avoid becoming "as bad as ſhe was, ſhe found ſhe had "little chance of carrying back any conſolation to Lord Dorcheſter;" and the night being far ſpent, ſhe took leave of me.

CHAP. XLIX.

MY mind had been too much agitated in the day, to allow me any reſt at night. The various attacks that had been made on my paſſions, had coſt my reaſon ſo much labour to reſiſt, that I had not ſtrength enough to compoſe my ſpirits, which, when Mr. South attended me the next morning, were in a ſtate little different from what they were when he left me the day before. He imagined night would afford me but little relief, and therefore came the earlier, out of a kind deſire to divert my thoughts, if he could not alleviate my uneaſineſs.

Before the hour the chariot was ordered, a letter was brought, which I perceived, by the ſuperſcription, was from Lord Dorcheſter. The firſt impulſe was to return it unopened, to avoid giving freſh pain to my heart; but before I could put the thought in execution, it gave place to a tenderer conſideration; I feared by ſuch a proceeding I might add to his uneaſineſs; and this, in a point that could do me no eſſential harm, was ungenerouſly

ungenerouſly preferring my own eaſe to his, and ſince I was juſt going to execute a reſolution which affected him ſo much, it would be cruel to encreaſe it unneceſſarily. I therefore opened the letter, and, to my great ſurprize, learnt from it, that " he left London before break of " day, in order to proceed directly to " my aunt's, having hopes of obtaining " her mediation in his favour, which " he flattered himſelf might have more " weight than any other perſon's had " yet had."

Nothing could have filled me with greater aſtoniſhment. To expect ſo good a woman ſhould plead in the excuſe of vice, appeared to me extremely abſurd; but the conſequence of this ſtep was the preventing my journey; ſince had I proſecuted it, I muſt have met him on the road, or found him there; neither of which would have been at all agreeable to my purpoſe. The beſt ſcheme I could now form, was to leave my lodging before he could return to town, and remove into ſome obſcure houſe in the ſuburbs; and that as ſoon as Mr. South, who kindly undertook this additional trouble, could learn that he was come back,

back, I ſhould ſet out directly on my journey. We were not without hopes, that as my Lord had taken his uſual retinue with him, the perſon employed to watch his arrival in London, might learn ſome particulars of the ſituation of my aunt's houſe, that would ſerve to direct us, and ſave a very difficult, and, perhaps, a very tedious ſearch after it.

My travelling equipage was ſent away, and every thing ſettled for my continuance at my lodging, till I imagined Lord Dorcheſter might be coming back; for I liked the people of the houſe too well to leave them while I could avoid it. Their humanity endeared them to me; they had gathered ſo much light into my ſituation, by circumſtances that had fallen within their obſervation, that I thought myſelf obliged to acquaint them with a little more, leſt they ſhould have received impreſſions that might make them diſcontented with my continuing in their houſe. This Mr. South performed; and though he told them very few particulars, yet their good nature appeared very conſpicuouſly on the occaſion, and their greateſt wiſh was to amuſe me. But in this they could not

ſucceed

ſucced ſo eaſily, as in making their houſe perfectly convenient. To relieve the anxiety of my mind, was reſerved for others, who, for the time they were with me, did it effectually, and inſpired me with a joy which on my own account I could not have felt.

Sir Charles Liſdale came to town two days after Lord Dorcheſter left it, and not finding his Lordſhip, went to Lady Paleſtine's, where he heard my whole hiſtory, and, deſirous of ſeeing me, was directed by her to my lodgings.

Sir Charles directly came to my lodgings, and ſending up his name, aſked leave to wait on me; a permiſſion I readily granted; and he was brought up ſtairs with a young lady who I perceived to be a daughter of Captain Traverſe, and conſequently received her with pleaſure. I was glad to obſerve more chearfulneſs in Sir Charles's countenance than when we laſt met. He accoſted me with ſaying, "he was come to claim the friendſhip "I had once offered him. That time, "abſence, and deſpair, had made him "more reaſonable, and brought him to "ſee that he was preſumptuous in aim-"ing to poſſeſs me, and not thinking

"that

" that my acquaintance and converſa-
" tion was more happineſs than he me-
" rited." I told him, " mine would be
" greater if he would ceaſe to flatter,
" an effect which I might hope from
" the improvement of his reaſon, of
" which he boaſted, ſince it muſt make
" him know, that in what he ſaid he
" far exceeded the truth, and might
" incline him to believe that he like-
" wiſe exceeded my credulity."

He anſwered, that " I had much miſ-
" taken the office of reaſon, if I imagin-
" ed it had altered his opinion of me, it
" had only made him more ſenſible of
" his demerits, which ſhewed too much
" inequality between us to give him the
" leaſt room for hope. But," conti-
nued he, taking the young lady who ac-
companied him by the hand, " let me
" beg your friendſhip for one who has
" kindly ſoothed my griefs, and turned
" my diſappointment into happineſs."
I was overjoyed at theſe words; I gather-
ed from them that they either were alrea-
dy, or were to be united. I embraced
and congratulated her with tranſport.
She had ſo favourable a proſpect of hap-
pineſs, both from Sir Charles's good qua-
lities,

lities, and the affluence of his fortune, that nothing could give me more pleaſure; ſhe bluſhed, in appearance, from exceſs of ſatisfaction, and looked up at him with ſo much love and gratitude as charmed me. I could not remain long without expreſſing a deſire to know how this union was brought about, which ſeemed to me as impoſſible as any thing could be. Sir Charles aſſured me he would gratify my curioſity, which he did in the following words.

" When you deprived me of all hopes " of obtaining your affection, having no " longer any pleaſure or intereſt in ſoci- " ety, my only aim was an abſolute re- " tirement, till my paſſion ſhould be ſo " much moderated as to allow me to " endure company, and to enable me to " be fit for it. To ſecure ſuch a retreat " it was neceſſary to chuſe ſome place " where I was not known. This led " me to the borders of Wales, as the " moſt promiſing for the ſolitude I " ſought. It anſwered my hopes. I " found a little cottage ſituated to my " wiſh, for every thing around it ap- " peared as deſolate as my mind. Leſt " I ſhould be troubled with viſits from

" any

" any gentleman in the neighbourhood,
" I concealed my name, and paſſed for
" a man driven thither by poverty and
" diſtreſs; a certain melancholy in my
" air created this report, and I would
" not contradict it, for nothing could
" better favour my temper. None are
" ſo ſure of neglect as the poor; they
" may enjoy an abſolute ſolitude in the
" moſt populous city; therefore it is not
" wonderful, if no one broke in upon
" my time and reflections. However, I
" had not been there long before I be-
" came acquainted with Captain Tra-
" verſe's family, whoſe circumſtances ap-
" peared to correſpond with mine. Lit-
" tle inclined to extend our thoughts be-
" yond ourſelves, we were made known
" to each other, only by ſitting in the
" ſame pew at church, without which
" circumſtance, perhaps, we ſhould have
" remained ignorant that there was any
" unhappy perſons in the neighbour-
" hood, beſides ourſelves. After we had
" been obliged to ſpeak civilly to each
" other, by theſe means, he one day in-
" vited me to go home with him, after
" church. I liked the manner of his be-
" haviour, and was well diſpoſed to ac-

" cept

" cept his invitation. Towards evening,
" he aſked me if I would drink a little
" milk," adding, " it might ſeem an
" odd queſtion, but it was the only of-
" fer he could make me, having neither
" tea nor wine, for they were too expen-
" ſive for perſons in his circumſtances,
" who wanted all the little money they
" had to furniſh them with more neceſſa-
" ry things. I was greatly pleaſed to ſee
" with what eaſe they denied themſelves
" the ſmall indulgence which the loweſt
" people enjoy. I would gladly have in-
" creaſed their income, but I feared to
" make myſelf ſuſpected of being leſs
" poor than I was thought, which I wiſh-
" ed to avoid till I knew whether they
" were to be truſted. Finding them very
" agreeable, I uſed frequently to viſit
" them, and they often returned it. I
" received great pleaſure from their ſoci-
" ety, and was more charmed with them
" as my acquaintance with their tempers
" and conduct increaſed. This young
" lady particularly, I found ſo amiable
" in her diſpoſition, as, joined with her
" beauty, to make me feel all the regard
" of a friend towards her. She ſhewed
" the ſame attentions to me; nor were her
" parents

" parents offended with our innocent af-
" fection. She was always employed ei-
" ther in attending her mother, taking
" care of the family or working for them.
" I admired the alacrity and good ſenſe
" with which ſhe performed her different
" duties, and became her companion in
" many of them. With very great diffi-
" culty I prevailed on the captain to ſuf-
" fer me to join my little family with
" theirs, on condition I ſhould pay half
" the expences of the whole. He ob-
" jected that this was more than my ſhare,
" and that he feared there was great ſi-
" militude in our circumſtances. How-
" ever, at laſt I ſucceeded, and we be-
" came one family. They let me bring
" books there, and thoſe that were at
" work would often liſten to me while
" I read aloud; my lovely Fanny moſt
" of all; tho' when we were alone the
" time was ſeldom given to books. I
" uſed to lament at my misfortunes,
" communicated to her the paſſion with
" which my heart was filled, concealing
" none of the truth but my name and
" fortune, leaving her to imagine that
" my ill ſucceſs proceeded from my po-
" verty. With how much good ſenſe

" ſhe

" ſhe would endeavour to ſhew me the
" neceſſity of conquering my love!
" With what gentle ſweetneſs would
" ſhe try to comfort me! How tenderly
" did ſhe join with me in my com-
" plaints, and endeavour to ſoothe
" them! It is impoſſible I can ever re-
" compence her for the exceſſive good-
" neſs ſhe ſhewed me. I am afraid her
" kind behaviour tempted me to teize
" her the more with my uneaſineſs. I
" felt ſo much pleaſure in being com-
" forted by her, as led me to encourage
" my diſtreſs.

" I had not long made part of this
" amiable family, when Captain Tra-
" verſe went to London. You already
" know what drew him thither, and the
" ill ſucceſs of his ſolicitations, as well
" as the unexpected bleſſings which
" Lord Dorcheſter's generoſity beſtow-
" ed upon him. I had undertaken to
" ſupply his care over his children's
" ſtudies during his abſence, which
" proved an agreeable amuſement to
" me, as I did not act the part of a
" ſchool-maſter long enough for it to
" loſe the pleaſure of novelty. Any
" thing new gave a turn to my thoughts,
" and was, thereby, of ſervice to me.

" Lord

" Lord Dorcheſter's letter broke in
" upon the peace I began to acquire,
" by robbing me of all my companions.
" His character ſufficiently convinced
" me that he had ſome generous deſign
" in ſending for them, tho' he hinted
" it but darkly in his letter. This could
" not recompence me for their loſs, as
" I was myſelf able to relieve their diſ-
" treſſes, and was determined, after be-
" ing longer acquainted with their me-
" rits, to have made them eaſy. My
" Fanny promiſed not to let a poſt paſs
" without acquainting me with the
" event of their journey, and was as
" good as her word. The joy and gra-
" titude expreſſed in her letter, made
" me envy Lord Dorcheſter the plea-
" ſure of having conferred ſo noble an
" obligation on people who had hearts
" to feel it ſo ſenſibly and eſteem it ſo
" juſtly. The captain's convenience
" would no longer ſuffer them to live
" at ſo great a diſtance from London,
" they therefore hired a houſe about
" twenty miles from it, which his Lord-
" ſhip furniſhed very genteely for them.
" As my Fanny and I kept up a very
" conſtant correſpondence, I was fre-
" quently ſolicited to forſake my de-
" ſolate

" ſolate ſolitude, and once more make
" part of their family. At firſt, melan-
" choly was more powerful than their
" perſuaſions, and I reſiſted them; but I
" ſoon began to accuſe myſelf of obſtina-
" cy, and, on their aſſuring me that they
" lived extremely retired, I conſented,
" and went to be a witneſs of, and con-
" ſequently a ſharer in the happineſs, at
" which none can arrive who have not be-
" fore felt the cruel diſtreſſes they had en-
" dured.

" But I had not enjoyed this ſatisfac-
" tion many days, before I was taken ill
" of a fever. My Fanny was now my
" conſtant friend and tender nurſe, and
" ſeemed to forget the general happineſs
" in a humane concern for what I ſuf-
" fered. My fever increaſed, till I grew
" ſo very ill that it appeared proper to
" ſend for a phyſician. He thought
" my life in great danger, which decla-
" ration made my fair nurſe inconſolable.
" The affliction in which ſhe appeared,
" touched me exceſſively. I fancied I
" ſaw in it a ſofter paſſion than friendſhip.
" No one can be truly ſenſible of the
" pleaſure of being beloved, but he who
" has felt all the pangs of an unſucceſs-

" ful

" ful paſſion. The hopes I had formed,
" increaſed my regard and eſteem for
" her; and one day, as ſhe was ſitting
" by my bed-ſide, I told her, that her
" incomparable goodneſs had conquered
" the grief with which my heart was
" filled, when I firſt knew her, and had
" taken the place of a love I thought
" eternal; therefore ſhe muſt not wonder
" if henceforward I complained of no
" paſſion but one for her, and I ſhould
" eſteem myſelf very happy if ſhe would
" take her uſual pains to comfort me.
" She looked ſtedfaſtly on me, and then
" calling to my ſervant, who was at the
" other end of the room, ſhe told him
" my ſenſes wandered, and deſired him
" to repeat the laſt medicine. I aſſured
" her that they were never more per-
" fect; and, after ſome time, convinced
" her that I ſpoke my real and ſober ſen-
" timents. She then burſt into tears,
" and begged I would not ſay any thing
" that might increaſe her affection, or
" make my company give her more plea-
" ſure, at a juncture when it was very un-
" certain how long ſhe ſhould enjoy it.
" This kind reception of my declaration
" rendered me incapable of obeying her;

" and

" and my melancholy ſituation ſo ſoft-
" ened her mind, that ſhe returned it in
" the moſt endearing manner. I would
" not diſcover my real circumſtances, de-
" ſirous to try her affection to the utmoſt.
" Her joy appeared very ſincere indeed,
" on being aſſured I was out of danger.
" The progreſs of my recovery gave her
" as much ſatisfaction as her ſatisfaction
" did me. I continued my addreſſes to
" her; but I found her return leſs ten-
" der as I grew better in health, which
" made me tell her that I wiſhed myſelf
" ſick again. However, I had no real
" cauſe for complaint. I perceived ſhe
" put ſome conſtraint on herſelf, to alter
" a behaviour which ſhe thought juſtifia-
" ble only during my illneſs, when mere
" compaſſion required a ſhew of tender-
" neſs.

" As ſoon as I got well, I propoſed
" to marry her. She begged me not to
" think of it, for ſhe could not poſſibly
" agree to add to my diſtreſſes by mak-
" ing me poorer; and thought we then
" lived happily in the innocent aſſurance
" of each other's affection. As this was
" an objection I could eaſily remove, it
" did not make me alter my deſign; but

" before

" before I confeſſed my real name, I " was deſirous of trying the degree of " eſtimation in which I was held by " Captain Traverſe, by making my pro- " poſal of becoming his ſon in-law, be- " fore he was acquainted with my for- " tune. But while I was preparing to " put this ſcheme in execution, my " thoughts received a new turn. My " ſickneſs had prevented me from hav- " ing much converſation in the family; " but now, being well enough to aſſoci- " ate with them, I was talking with the " Captain on the change in his affairs, " when he mentioned Lord Dorcheſter's " Lady. Having left him a batchelor, " I was curious to know who ſhe was, " perhaps the more ſo for the jealouſy I " had always entertained of him, think- " ing that I perceived he was favoured " by you. The deſcription they gave " me, and the raptures they were all " in when they mentioned your beauty " and every circumſtance of your be- " haviour, convinced me my happy ri- " val had triumphed. Tho' I thought " my paſſion over, yet I own I was ſo " much affected with this news, that I " could not contain myſelf. I had grown

" eaſy

" eaſy by looking on you as a being far
" above us, one deſigned to be adored,
" but not poſſeſſed; one to whom all
" mankind, as well as myſelf, muſt pay
" an unavailing worſhip, and ſubmitted
" patiently to the general fate; but I
" found I could not bear to think ano-
" ther enjoyed a happineſs I believed
" above a mortal.

" My deareſt Fanny will ſuffer me to
" repeat this, as my emotions were too
" viſible not to be perceived by her, who
" cruelly made me aſhamed of my be-
" haviour by the moſt generous tender-
" neſs. She gueſſed you were the wo-
" man whom I had often deſcribed, while
" ſhe was the confidante of my paſſion.
" Inſtead of reproaching me for harbour-
" ing in my breaſt the ſparks of any
" other love than her's, ſhe uſed all her
" ſoftneſs to comfort me, while ſhe ten-
" derly grieved for my misfortune and
" her own. Thus was I cured of my
" relapſe, and in a few days reſtored to
" my peace of mind, ceaſing to envy
" Lord Dorcheſter his divine Sachariſſa,
" and happy in my lovely and tender
" Amoret. Her father declared he could

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" refuſe me nothing, but adviſed us not " to marry; however, finding us re- " ſolved, he conſented. I then gave " them all an exact account of my cir- " cumſtances, which you may imagine " did not abate the ſatisfaction then " reigning in the family. I remained " with them at their country houſe till " two days ago, that I ventured to come " and congratulate you and Lord Dor- " cheſter on your union. You may ima- " gine how much I was ſurprized to " find it was not compleated; but could " not forbear coming hither to introduce " to you my Fanny, who made me the " happieſt of men about a week ago, by " becoming my wife. And now, Ma- " dam, like all other romances, mine " muſt end with wedlock; but permit " me to hope we ſhall never be ſo much " tired of each other as you muſt be of " us both in this long ſtory."

Sir Charles was much miſtaken, for I was never leſs ſo. I was overjoyed at acquiring two amiable friends, and at ſeeing him ſo happy. For once I reflected with pleaſure on the inconſtancy of mankind, ſince it had been ſo fortunate to him. I ought not to confine the happineſs

happineſs of it entirely to Sir Charles as I have received ſo much from it myſelf; for the friendſhip which has ever ſince ſubſiſted between me, Sir Charles, his lady, and her amiable family, I have always eſteemed one of the moſt pleaſing circumſtances of my life.

CHAP. L.

I HOPE your Ladyſhip now thinks it time, after ſo long a digreſſion, to return to Lord Dorcheſter; for I ſhould be ſorry to carry you ſo tedious a journey, without you undertook it willingly; and yet, having little to ſay of myſelf during that interval, I am under a neceſſity of doing it, leſt I ſhould ſeem to have put in execution the lover's wiſh, and appear to have "annihilated both "ſpace and time to make two lovers "happy." Lord Dorcheſter travelled moſt expeditiouſly to my aunt's cottage. He found her reclined on a couch, the ſerenity of her countenance changed into the moſt dejected air, and her freſh com-

plexion into a ſickly pale. He came ſo gently to the door, that ſhe did not hear him till he was entering the threſhold. As ſoon as ſhe ſaw him, ſhe ſtarted up, and, with eyes that ſhot forth impatience and anger, but not without a mixture of joy, cried out, "where is my child? "where is my Ophelia?"

The alteration Lord Dorcheſter perceived in her, awakened ſo ſevere a ſenſe of the injury he had done her, that he was diſtreſſed and confounded, and could utter no more than "ſhe is well; forgive "me, Madam, forgive me!"

"Thank heaven!" cried my aunt, with hands and eyes lifted towards the heaven ſhe thanked, "my child is well!" and then burſting into a flood of tears, ſunk down on the couch, where ſhe remained ſome time, not too much affected to utter now and then a grateful ejaculation, which would force it's way in ſpite of the tears that almoſt ſuffocated her.

My Lord was too much moved to interrupt her till this painful exceſs of joy was abated; and then could do nothing but aſk her forgiveneſs for all the uneaſineſs

eaſineſs he muſt have given her; proteſting his deſire of making her all poſſible reparation. "As the firſt proof "of it," ſaid ſhe, "let me know whe-"ther you give me a poſſibility of par-"doning you, by having the leaſt title "to it. Inform me of every particular "ſince you robbed me of my dear child, "the delight and only ſupport of my "life. But before you enter into a "detail which may take up time, firſt "tell me where ſhe is? what is her ſi-"tuation? and whether ſhe ſtill does "honour to the care I took to inſtruct "her in the precepts of Religion and "Virtue, that I may be better able to "liſten to the reſt?"

In theſe points Lord Dorcheſter gave her full ſatisfaction; and then proceeded to relate the whole in order, only was at a loſs to know how I became acquainted with his deſign. He endeavoured to excuſe himſelf on account of his prejudices againſt matrimony, and expatiated on his objections to it, concluding, by telling her, that "his love "had conquered them all, and to be "united to me was the wiſh neareſt

" his heart; and that I had hitherto
" been inflexible, and, more mercileſs
" than Heaven, would not pardon the
" ſincere penitent." " You could not
" have ſaid any thing which could have
" have given me ſo ſincere a pleaſure,"
replied my aunt, " ſince this proves my
" niece's principles to be ſuch as I wiſh
" them. Heaven, indeed, forgives the
" ſincere penitent; but then the heart
" is there laid open, and the ſincerity
" of it is well known. Ophelia cannot
" have the ſame aſſurance of your's;
" even yourſelf cannot; we often miſ-
" take the effects of diſappointed paſ-
" ſion for real virtue. If the innocence
" and unfeigned piety of ſo fine a young
" creature could not change your heart,
" how can one ſuppoſe any thing elſe
" will have that power. You tell me
" ſhe loves you; therefore may be ſure
" her paſſions plead in your favour, and
" could her reaſon give a ſanction to
" them, ſhe would concur with your
" wiſhes. That it has ſtrength ſuffi-
" cient to conquer the inſtigations of
" her love, and the perſuaſions of her
" lover, raiſes her in my eſteem, and

" gives

" gives me a pleaſure that almoſt repays
" me for what I have ſuffered on her
" account. Does not this noble com-
" mand over herſelf, this ſteady adher-
" ence to every virtuous principle,"
continued ſhe, " make you bluſh at the
" remembrance of your deſign to debaſe
" ſo much excellence? A little reflec-
" tion, my Lord, will ſhew you the
" falſe principles on which you have
" founded your objections to matrimony.
" Are you of ſo perverſe a nature, that
" a conformity to the laws of God and
" man muſt rob ſociety of all it's
" charms? And muſt the converſation
" of one who loves you, loſe all it's
" merit, as ſoon as it can be enjoyed
" without a crime? Surely no man can
" be ſo abandoned as to own ſuch de-
" praved ſentiments! You are, it ſeems,
" diſguſted with the behaviour of many
" wives; would you therefore, to mend
" a woman's conduct, learn her to de-
" ſpiſe all ties, human and divine; and
" to render her an amiable and valua-
" ble companion, inſtruct her in vice?
" Is that a means of teaching her to ac-
" quit herſelf of the duties of ſociety,

" and the tenderer obligations of more
" intimate connexions. Another of
" your arguments againſt marriage is
" little better than a proſe paraphraſe
" of

Love, light as air, at ſight of human ties,
Spreads its light wings, and in a moment
flies.

" With all the abandoned rhapſody of
" voluptuous vice. You talk of free-
" dom and equality in a ſituation which
" entirely aboliſhes both. What can
" render a woman ſo much your ſlave,
" as having given up her fair fame,
" and that ſweet peace that goodneſs
" boſoms ever, to gratify your mean
" paſſions? Where then is the equality
" between you? You have in your
" power every pleaſure but ſelf-appro-
" bation; and, perhaps, the hardened
" do not want that, while the woman
" has nothing left her but your love,
" which it is more her intereſt to keep,
" even by little deſpicable arts, than it
" could be in any other ſituation. As
" ſoon as reaſon begins to return, in
" what light do you imagine ſhe herſelf
" muſt

" muſt ſee the man who has robbed her " of every bleſſing in life? Muſt ſhe " not grow uneaſy under ſuch circum- " ſtances, and deteſt the ungenerous " mind that could draw her into an ac- " tion whoſe conſequences were to her " ſo grievous, and to him ſo trifling, " that unleſs honour makes him, rather " than deſert the woman he has ruined, " endure the effects of her afflicted " heart, and the fretfulneſs which na- " turally ariſes from it, he is under no " worldly diſadvantage."

Lord Dorcheſter liſtened with all the humility of a ſchool-boy to his monitor, and gave her no interruption, but, with a doleful face, and a ſimple ſheepiſhneſs that he never felt before, cried, now and then, " very true, Madam; right, " Madam; to be ſure, Madam;" and ſuch like ſentences of mild and baſhful approbation; till my aunt thought it cruel to humble him any longer, into ſuch a ſneaking repentant boy. When ſhe ended her ſermon, he aſſured her that he was perfectly convinced of the truth of all ſhe had ſaid, and proteſted, with an air of ſincerity that almoſt con-

vinced her, that " if he might have the " free choice, whether he ſhould have " her niece for his wife or miſtreſs, he " ſhould not heſitate a moment, but " prefer that ſtate which ſhould ſecure " her from the cenſure of the world, " and the reproaches of her own con- " ſcience." He abjured his paſt errors, ſhewed the fallacies which had given riſe to them, and confuted his own arguments ſo much more forcibly than my aunt could do, that ſhe was touched with his candour, and grieved for the pernicious education and examples which had created any blemiſhes in a mind that ſeemed naturally virtuous and upright. When he had ſucceeded thus far, it was not very difficult to move a heart by nature tender, and ſoftened by affliction. The exceſs of his grief excited her compaſſion, and pity had ſome ſhare in making her promiſe to accompany him, though when ſhe did it, ſhe imagined her only motive was the deſire of ſeeing me. During their journey, his diſtreſs prevailed on her to undertake to obtain his forgiveneſs. He did not doubt but my regard for her,

her, and the high opinion I had both of her judgment and principles, would make me ſubmit to her perſuaſions, eſpecially as he was too ſenſible they correſponded with the ſecret, though ſuppreſſed wiſhes of my heart. When they arrived in London, I had, according to the plan I had formed, left my lodging, and to ſave my kind landlady the pain of telling a falſhood, did not acquaint her with the place which I intended for my aſylum. Mr. South, to avoid being importuned to diſcover my abode, changed his habitation likewiſe, and choſe one whom he could truſt, to watch Lord Dorcheſter's coming to town. His ſpy performed his office ſo well, that he heard it the night of his arrival, and was told by him that he ſaw my Lord hand a lady out of his chariot.

Mr. South aſked me "if I did not "imagine from this, my Lord had "ſucceeded, and, in reality, brought "up my aunt?" I could not believe there was a poſſibility of her giving ſuch a ſanction to his paſt conduct; however,

ever, I wiſhed to be entirely certain: I dared not, indeed, conſent that Mr. South ſhould venture to Lord Dorcheſter's, leſt, by watching him, my retreat might be diſcovered, as it was before; but told him, that as they would naturally go to my old lodgings, if my Lord had really prevailed on her to accompany him, we might gain ſome intelligence from thence. Mr. South went thither accordingly the next morning, and learnt that "Lord Dorcheſter, and a lady, "whom they found by their diſcourſe "was my aunt, came there as ſoon as "they entered London, and aſking for "me, were under the greateſt conſterna-"tion at hearing I was gone from "thence." The good woman told them my motive, but at the ſame time aſſured them ſhe knew not to what place I was removed. Upon this information, they went away much diſappointed, after having promiſed her any reward if ſhe could contrive a means of finding me out. She told them "ſhe wanted "no other inducement to do that, than "the pleaſure I ſhould receive from

"ſeeing

" ſeeing an aunt I ſeemed to love ſo " tenderly."

As I was at a very great diſtance from my old lodgings, Mr. South thought that to go back to me would be robbing me of ſome hours of joy, and therefore, inſtead of returning, went to Lord Dorcheſter, where he found his Lordſhip and my aunt, concerting meaſures for finding me. The ſight of him was moſt welcome to the former; with delight he received him, and intreated him " to inform an anxious " parent, and the ſtill tenderer anxiety " of a lover, where I was?"

As this was the intent of Mr. South's viſit, he immediately complied, and offered to guide them to me. The equipage was ſent for, and ſtopped at my door, ſometime after my impatience for the account I expected Mr. South to bring had fixed me to the window in hopes of ſeeing him arrive.

At the ſight of my aunt, I ran to meet her; and we received each other with an embrace from which the ſpectators thought we could never be diſengaged. I had already felt how much the

the imagination falls ſhort of the reality in ſorrow, I now found it as poor a mirror of our joy. The extacy I was in, at ſeeing one ſo inexpreſſibly dear to me, far exceed the force of fancy, and a long time paſſed in rejoicing at the felicity we felt, before I took notice of the perſon who accompanied my aunt.

My Lord looked on me with tenderneſs and grief, but with an anxious timerouſneſs that rendered him ſilent. My aunt obſerving it, as ſoon as we could think of any thing but the joy of meeting, told me, "ſhe had under-"taken to plead, what I ſhould think "a bad cauſe, unleſs I would allow "repentance waſhed away ſin." She then proceeded to ſay, "ſhe thought "Lord Dorcheſter had ſuffered ſo much "he deſerved to be forgiven." I objected all I had before ſaid to myſelf and others on the occaſion. I arraigned his principles and conduct with more ſeverity, I believe, for finding he had an advocate; for I felt a ſatisfaction in hearing him a little excuſed. My aunt's arguments were much the ſame with

with Miſs Baden's, and would not have proved more efficacious, had it not been eaſier to influence my heart than to convince my reaſon. Her opinion gave a ſanction for my yielding; I could call my weakneſs obedient; an opportunity of ſo agreeably deceiving myſelf, ſtaggered my reſolution, and I began to liſten with pleaſure to the apology my aunt made for him.

As ſoon as Lord Dorcheſter had perceived me wavering between reaſon and love, to ſtrengthen the party of the latter, he attacked me with the moſt perſuaſive importunity. Though my heart felt every ſyllable he uttered, yet my mind was too much agitated to ſuffer my memory to retain what he ſaid; all I know is, that every word, every look, every action of his, ſpoke too much to be expreſſed by any other. Such powerful eloquence was not to be for ever reſiſted; unable to bear a longer continuance of the ſcene, I cried out, "you have conquered all my "reſolutions; diſpoſe of the remain-"der of my life as you pleaſe; my "happineſs

" happineſs is in your hands; I may " repent, but I find I muſt comply!"

Lord Dorcheſter's exceſſive joy made me feel that pleaſure in my conſent which reaſon had denied me. My felicity was perfect in ſeeing I had made him happy; I was inſenſible to any dangers, with which my peace was threatened by his principles, while I had the infinite ſatisfaction of imparting happineſs to one that was dearer to me than myſelf; I felt I was unworthy of a thought, mine were all engroſſed by him, every other object ſeemed beneath my care, and if he was happy I believed I muſt be bleſſed.

As ſoon as his Lordſhip's extaſies were a little over, my aunt turned toward him and ſaid, " my Lord, I have " done all you aſked of me; I have " ſuffered compaſſion, and that weak " ſympathy, which I believe all feel " for the pains of lovers, who have " themſelves known the pangs of love, " to conquer my opinion. I have per- " ſuaded the only joy of my heart, " and bleſſing of my age, to an uni-

" on

" on with a man whoſe principles I
" always looked upon as an infallible
" ſource of unhappineſs to the wo-
" man whoſe fate muſt depend upon
" them. I never ſaw any thing but
" repentance ſucceed a marriage with
" a rake; and yet compaſſion for you,
" and, indeed, for my niece, whoſe
" fondneſs for you is but too viſible,
" through all the reſolution ſhe has
" aſſumed, has made me plead your
" cauſe, and prevail in it. I feared
" for her, the grief which would have
" ſucceeded the ſharper pains of ſepa-
" ration. I, who have felt it, know
" how hardly life is ſupported under
" a load of ſorrow. I pitied you for
" having a worthy mind ſo corrupted.
" Can you do leſs, my Lord, than
" reward Ophelia's love and my com-
" paſſion, by preſerving the principles
" you now profeſs, and by keeping the
" ſtricteſt guard over yourſelf, leſt you
" ſhould again deviate from the path of
" virtue? I know you are not ab-
" ſolutely a rake, and therein I place
" my hopes."

Your

Your Ladyſhip may imagine Lord Dorcheſter was not ſparing of his promiſes. He defended himſelf from the imputation of a rake, though he confeſſed his principles had been very defective, and gave her every aſſurance that could make her eaſy; and what is more extraordinary, he fulfilled them all, and rendered the reſt of our lives a ſcene of bliſs; though I confeſs it was not immediately I could depend on my own happineſs. I feared reverſes, which would be more ſeverely felt for the felicity I enjoyed. But time baniſhed my apprehenſions, and taught me that a mind naturally good may be clouded for a time, but will recover its original luſtre, and ſhake off the bad influence of vicious examples, and the erroneous opinions of the faſhionable world, if it has the good fortune to ſuffer ſufficiently by them. But as that does not happen ſo often as one could wiſh, for the reformation of mankind, and it is difficult to know when a perſon has been ſufficiently puniſhed to effect their amendment, mine was a dangerous

dangerous trial, and, I think, my imprudence in making it, deſerved a puniſhment rather than a reward; which has increaſed my gratitude to Heaven for a ſtate of happineſs which I by no means merited.

Lord Dorcheſter, to gratify himſelf in his darling pleaſure for doing good, procured a very conſiderable preferment for Mr. South, and behaved with the utmoſt generoſity to my aunt; he ſettled a very handſome income on her; and to gratify both her and me, made ſuch additions to her little cottage, as gave us the power of accompanying her thither, where we ſpent three months in every year, which, in the opinion of us all, was the time when we enjoyed the moſt perfect happineſs, as we were there free from all interruptions.

Lord Dorcheſter was very deſirous of knowing how I became acquainted with his deſigns on me; but I made his giving a ſolemn promiſe never to aſk any queſtions concerning it, one of the conditions of our marriage. I feared his reſentment againſt Lord Larborough, had he been acquainted with the part he

he acted, and ſhould have been very ſorry if Lord Larborough had ſuffered by making a diſcovery that was ſo fortunate for me; beſides that Lord Dorcheſter might have been expoſed to his ſhare of danger, had a quarrel enſued. Lord Larborough was, I believe, under no ſmall apprehenſions on finding what turn the affair had taken; but I ſeized the firſt opportunity of making him eaſy, by giving my word that "I would con-
"ceal every thing he had done, in con-
"ſideration of the obligation he thereby
"conferred on me, and that he might
"reſt in perfect ſecurity in that parti-
"cular."

He returned me many thanks, aſſuring me that "he would ever grate-
"fully acknowledge it; and, to pre-
"vent all poſſibility of giving me any
"future offence by a paſſion he was
"unable to ſtifle, he would by degrees,
"break off his intimacy with my Lord,
"and avoid me as much as he could."
This reſolution he ſteadily executed; and before he died, which was two years after my marriage, he had almoſt entirely dropped our acquaintance. After

ter his death, as no danger could ariſe from it, I acquainted my Lord with what he had too ſtrict a regard to his promiſe to have aſked of me, telling him all that paſſed between Lord Larborough and myſelf, which, he ſaid, " rendered " his Lordſhip rather the object of his " gratitude, than of his anger, ſince " the happy effects of what he had " done excuſed the intention."

Having obeyed your Ladyſhip's commands, I ſhall now lay aſide my pen, without making any apology for being ſo circumſtantial, ſince obedience to your orders made me ſo; but ſhall grieve in ſilence that it was not in my power to render this little work more worthy of her who is to honour it with a peruſal. If I have in ſome places repeated compliments which lay me under an imputation of vanity, I hope you will conſider it as the unavoidable conſequence of telling one's own ſtory with the ſincerity you required; and as a neceſſary thing, in order to keep up in my reader ſuch an idea of my perſon, as may repreſent me

me more worthy of her attention, which you might have thought thrown away on a dowdy, and deprived me of the honour of ſubſcribing myſelf,

Your Ladyſhip's

moſt obedient,

humble ſervant,

OPHELIA DORCHESTER.

FINIS.